

## THE COUSINS AND THEIR FRIENDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDNEY GREY," ETC.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE LONDON COUSINS.

THE old schoolroom at No. —, Eccleston Square, was not, as Hugh Lord was accustomed to call it whenever he was in a particularly bad humour, the horriddest, hottest, noisiest hole in all London; to many poor, pale London children it would have seemed a perfect paradise of fresh air, free space, and pleasant appliances for agreeable occupation; but yet in justice to Hugh we may confess that it was by no means the best place for a boy who was trying hard to keep his place at the head of his form in King's school, to study his next day's lesson in.

It was a wide, low room at the very top of one of the tallest houses in the square; the three broad windows faced westwards, and on spring afternoons let the full glare of the sun fall in dusty squares on the faded carpet, and made dazzling reflections on the gaudily-coloured pictures that were pasted in irregular patterns on the opposite wall. There had been Venetian blinds to the windows a year ago, but smooth green-painted slips of wood were in far too much request among the younger Lord children to be allowed to hang idly before the windows, when they could be secured for such important uses as mending the broken roof of Noah's ark, or making a new verandah for the doll's house, by simply standing on a chair and snipping a piece of tape with nurse's scissors. Day by day, all through the winter, the Venetians had been growing shorter and shorter, and now, when their shade would have been so welcome, there only remained to each window the three upper joints, which no one shorter than Hugh could have reached to cut off, even by standing on the highest of the old nursery chairs.

No wonder the schoolroom was hot, more especially as the children had been strictly forbidden to open the windows ever since that un-

lucky day when Tommy and Kathleen Lord (after bolting the school-room door inside) had thrust their heads and shoulders so far out between the window-bars, to look after a retreating Punch, that they could not draw them in again, and had to remain a spectacle of warning and horror to all the children in the square, till the square gardener climbed up a long ladder, and released them by wrenching away the window-bars.

The wonder to poor Hugh was, that no one but himself ever seemed to be the very least discomforted by the heat and glare, or by the noise, which seemed to rise loudest and longest when the sun was beating hottest on his puzzled head, and the words in his dictionary took (as they sometimes did of an afternoon) to wriggling up and down on the page and making faces at him, as if they were alive. Nothing, certainly, ever seemed to disturb Magda; there she was, sitting in the very centre of the brightest square on the carpet, with a book open on her lap, and her hands covering her ears, reading as happily as if Tommy were *not* hammering nails into a rickety old barrel with two hammers at a time, and Kathleen kneeling in the furthest window pounding cochineal seeds with the kitchen pestle and mortar. Magda was Hugh's own particular sister; he knew quite well that he should have the benefit of what she was reading by and by, when the hours for school preparation had passed, and the late dinner was over downstairs, and the dining-room below left vacant for them to pace up and down in.

Hugh generally looked forward to hearing Magda's stories about what she read. He liked tales as she told them to him when they were walking up and down the dining-room together, better than in the books themselves; yet on the Friday afternoon on which our tale begins, it did not please him to observe how absorbed she was in the new tale she had got hold of, or the haste she was making to reach the end before talking-time came. Her haste might be a good deal on his account; but he thought just then that he should have been better pleased if, instead of settling herself to read, she had remembered that Saturday was repetition day; that his place in his form for a whole week depended on the success of Friday afternoon's study; and that when there was so much to look over, her help in searching out words in the dictionary was always welcome. Why, even Kathleen, busy as she was in pounding her cochineal, was ready whenever



Ratcliffe's sing-song voice paused in his whispered construing, to spring from the window-seat to the table, and offer her help. Then the clatter of the two tongues over the difficult passage was nearly as loud, and quite as distracting, as Tommy's two hammers.

"Now listen, Kathy, and tell me if that sounds right," Ratcliffe began. "*Tum* then *Dido*—*Dido*—*demissa*, having thrust off or cast away, *breviter voltum*, her short face; stay, I'm afraid those two words can't be coaxed to go together, but at all events I know *voltum* is a face, so don't bother to look for it; let's try again. Then *Dido* having, in short, thrown away her face, *profatur*, set forth, *solvite corde*, with an untied or unfastened heart, *metum Teucris*, to meet the Teucrans."

"Oh, but stop a minute, Ratty," exclaimed Kathleen; "how could *Dido* go to meet the Teucrans, if she had thrown away her face; and, besides, can *metum* possibly be a verb?"

"Oh, bother! yes, to be sure it can—a disgusting supine, you may depend—'to meet the Teucrans,' yes, that goes very well. It is oddish about *Dido*'s face, certainly; but, never mind, she's always doing something odd. There's no nominative case in the next sentence, I declare. Well, Mr. Ward will have to do without a nominative case, that's all. Hurry on, and I'll come and help you to pound and mix your dyes in a minute or two."

Hugh wished he could hurry on, and feel as independent of nominative cases, as his brother; for he knew that when once Ratcliffe considered himself free, even the slight degree of order that reigned in the schoolroom now would be at an end. Ratcliffe, who stayed contentedly at the bottom of the form month after month, and allowed the greatest dunces in the school to pass him unconcernedly, could not at all understand his brother's anxiety to master his lessons thoroughly before he left them, and really believed he was doing Hugh a kindness by trying to worry him out of his fiddle-faddle particularity.

"A regular sap old Hugh would be, if we let him alone, Kathy," Ratcliffe remarked, as he shut his dictionary with a sounding bang; "he was at it the instant he got into the house, while you and I were chasing each other up and down stairs, and there he'll sit, if we let him—grind, grind, grind—till he has stuffed himself so full of Latin words that they'll tumble out of his mouth when one shakes him, or break out in blotches all over his face—a sort of Latin rash. I always think old Ward must have had it, he is so wonderfully puckered and ugly,

and knows such a lot of Latin. Hugh is growing just like him ; it's a terrible pity."

"Never mind, I promised Beatrice not to help you to plague Hugh this afternoon, if we could help it ; so come into my corner, and see what I'm doing. It is not every day one can get the pestle and mortar out of the kitchen, and cook's cochineal, and the pink and blue Mary uses when she is washing Beatrice's collars and things. I had to make so many soft journeys down stairs to get them, and now I am making the loveliest colours. My dear Ratty, we'll dye everything in the house crimson—a splendid crimson, with perhaps a border of blue. We won't waste all the dye on our pocket-handkerchiefs, as we did last time. I have observed this about pocket-handkerchiefs : whatever one puts on them that one wants to come off, stays on ; and what one wants to stay on, washes off. Besides, it would be waste any way, for no one ever looks at our pocket-handkerchiefs ; whereas, if we could get anything out of the drawing-room to dye—the table-cloth, which is faded, I heard Aunt Martha say so, or Beatrice's banner screen, we should feel ourselves so uncommonly useful."

But Ratcliffe had no ambition to be uncommonly useful, and did not share the energy which, ill-directed as it was, caused Kathleen to bestow a considerable amount of perseverance and energy on her own inventions. A play, even a mischievous one, which called for a little monotonous exertion, was never long in favour with him. In about five minutes, he resigned the pestle and mortar to Kathleen again, having discovered that pounding tired his arms, and found a more congenial employment in mixing some of the powder with water in a jar, dipping the end of a towel in it, and cautiously letting drops of the crimson liquid fall on Hugh's and Magda's faces and dress till they looked as if they had been exposed to a shower of red rain. They were both so absorbed in what they were doing that for some time they did not perceive whence the annoyance came, and contented themselves with dashing the cold drops away when they touched their faces, so smearing themselves still more strangely.

Tommy left off hammering to look up and grin ; and even Kathleen, though she did not like Hugh or Magda to be teased when they were busy, could not help watching the operation with some interest. At last, Hugh caught sight of the towel retreating, after it had left a great crimson drop on his nose, and jumped up—now fairly roused into on

of the fits of indignation which occasionally made the inmates of the schoolroom regret having ventured to play tricks upon him—

“Ratcliffe, I won’t stand it!”

“No need, my dear boy, we only want you to sit it.”

“Give me that thing, and be quiet, or else go out of the room.”

“I should think so. Don’t you wish you may get it? A fine thing, a fine thing; what will you do to the owner of this fine thing?”

And Ratcliffe danced about the room, flourishing the dripping towel high over his head. Then began one of the regular skirmishes which occasionally caused the old gentleman who lived next door to send in a servant, with his compliments to Mr. Sergeant Lord, and desire to know whether Bedlam had broken loose in his house.

Hugh chased Ratcliffe round the room, over, under, round chairs, chests of drawers, tables, caring very little what they overturned in their course. Magda and her book were shoved into one corner; Tommy, his barrel and his hammers, sent spinning helter-skelter into another; while Kathleen, who could not make up her mind which of the combatants she meant to favour, hovered between them, and made useless clutches, sometimes at one and then at the other, getting for her pains more rough pushes and angry words than any one else. It ended, as such encounters generally did when Hugh was in earnest, in Ratcliffe’s being captured, and pushed by main force into a light closet called the rubbish-hole, which opened into the schoolroom, and which was the general receptacle for everything, animate or inanimate, that the ruling power for the time being in the schoolroom found to be in the way.

Ratcliffe was very much at home there, among the torn books and broken toys that heaped the shelves, though he chose to keep up a tremendous battery against the door when Hugh locked it upon him that afternoon.

In the midst of the commotion, the schoolroom door opened, and in walked a pretty, dark-haired young lady in an evening dress. This was the young Lords’ eldest sister, Beatrice—Bee, the young ones generally called her. She was quite six years older than Magda, the next eldest of the family now at home; and for the last year, since their mother’s death, their father had to a great extent trusted her with the management of the younger children out of school hours. Her kind, pleasant face was a little clouded just now; and when she caught

sight of the crimson stains on Magda's dress, and on Hugh's forehead and nose, she spoke in a vexed tone of voice :

"You absurd children, I can't think how you can be so childish," she said ; "you have been making a dreadful noise all the time I have been dressing. If I had not been afraid of keeping papa waiting for dinner, I should have come in sooner. What can you have been about ?"

Magda and Kathleen here burst in together, each with a different version of the occurrences of the afternoon.

"Ratcliffe is such a plague, dear Bee, there's no bearing him in the room," said Magda.

"Hugh and Magda are so dull and tiresome, and make such fusses about nothing," cried Kathleen.

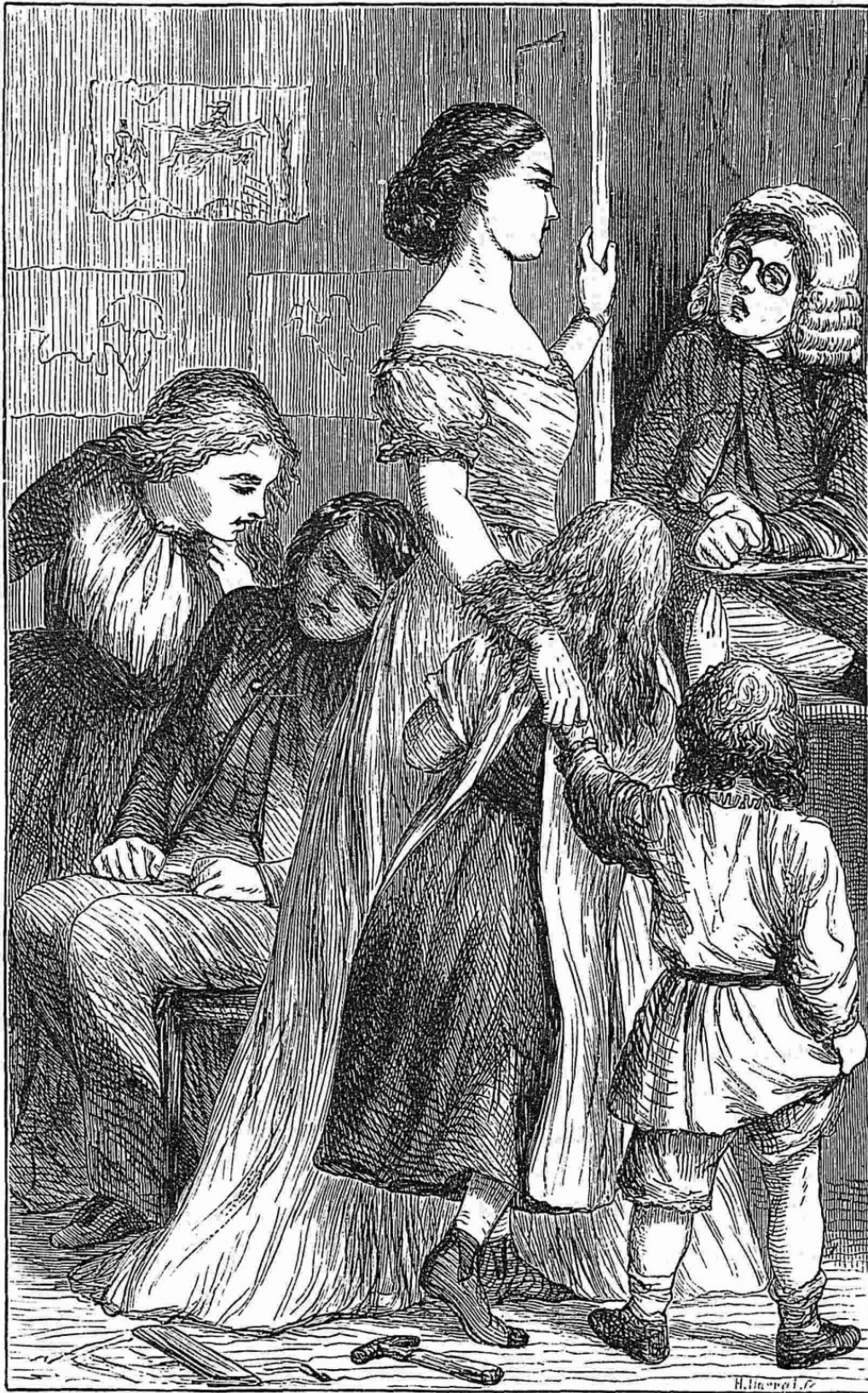
"Hindering Hugh from preparing his lessons—just to-day, too, when he gave up riding that he might have time to do them properly, as you know, Bee—such a shame, is it not ?" pleaded Magda.

"Just a drop or two of cochineal ! So absurd to call that hindering, or a shame," Kathleen went on. "Ratty was only trying how the colour looked ; they need not have minded ; I should not."

Little Tommy, who was sister Bee's pet, crept up to her side, and showed dolefully a scratch on his hand and a bruise on his knee that had fallen to his share in the scramble ; but Hugh said nothing. Since his race round the room, he had thrown himself down on his chair very tired and breathless ; and just now an odd feeling had come over him, as if the room were turning round and round, and the excited voices near him going further off and getting more strangely mixed up together every minute. Every one was too busy talking, however, to notice how ill he looked.

"I must speak to Ratcliffe myself," Beatrice said. Then she unlocked the closet door and desired Ratcliffe, who had left off drumming since her entrance, to come out into the room. He took no notice of her order, and angry as she was she could not help laughing when her eyes fell upon him. He had perched himself cross-legged on one of the closet shelves, put on an old Welsh wig and an enormous iron-rimmed pair of spectacles (the children's great treasures for dressing up), and with such a grave, lengthened face as only Ratcliffe knew how to put on, was pretending to be wholly absorbed in studying a tattered atlas open on his knee. In vain Beatrice scolded and desired





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him to come down from the shelf directly and listen to what she had got to say; he sat still without even moving a muscle of his face or raising an eyelid.

"I insist on your speaking, Ratcliffe," Beatrice said at last. "If you are so absurd and pay no attention to what I say to you, I shall be obliged to call papa to come up stairs."

Ratcliffe turned his spectacled face towards her, and began slowly as if he were reading from his book :

"There was an old man in a tree,  
Who was horridly bored by a Bee,  
When they said, 'Does it buzz?'  
He replied, 'Yes, it does,  
It's a regular brute of a Bee.'"

Tom and Kathleen laughed out loud. They were standing behind Beatrice, and did not see as Magda did how her face flushed at Ratcliffe's rudeness, and how puzzled she looked what to say or do next. Magda was always indignant at an attack on Beatrice. She understood better than the others how every instance of the children's unruliness made Beatrice grieve more bitterly than ever for the loss of the dear mother whose presence in the house had made it such a very different place a year ago. Magda really felt for Beatrice, and loved and admired her for the efforts she made to do her duty to them all, but unfortunately she was always more ready to complain of the boys for being disobedient than to take trouble beforehand to prevent mischief. She was too angry to be quiet now; but she could think of nothing better to do than to rush madly downstairs, seize upon her father as he left his dressing-room to go down to dinner, and call out: "Papa, papa, come to the schoolroom at once. Hugh is nearly fainting, and Ratcliffe is calling Beatrice a brute."

Mr. Lord, who had come home very tired after a day's anxious occupation, sighed as he mounted the steep stairs leading to the upper storey, and remembered that he used not to have to climb them on such errands as this when his wife was alive. The stories he had heard about the children had always been pleasant then; now there never seemed to be anything going on but complaints and quarrels.

Ratcliffe slipped off his disguise and came down into the room when he heard his father's step, and the other children stood round very

quiet and silent, all more or less ashamed of having brought him up to the top of the house at that time of day.

Mr. Lord started back when he saw Hugh's pale face blotched with red stains.

"What have you been doing Hugh? fighting?"

"Oh no," explained Kathy, "the red is only paint, and the white is just making himself queer over his lessons, and running after Ratcliffe."

"This stifling room is enough to make any one queer," Mr. Lord exclaimed. "Why in the world don't you open the windows?"

"Oh, that's Tommy, because he always will wriggle out if the windows are ever such a little way open."

"Did you ride with Beatrice this afternoon, Hugh?" Mr. Lord asked.

"No, papa," Hugh answered, in rather a complaining voice. "I could not possibly, I had so much work to do. If I get put down now I shall lose all chance of the prize at Midsummer."

"But I desired you to ride, Hugh. Where is the use of my having bought a pony for you, if you wont use it?"

"If you'd given me the pony, I'd have used it fast enough, papa," cried Ratcliffe.

"I dare say, but I did not give it to you. And now, Hugh, put away all your books. Wash that paint from your face, and go down into the drawing-room and rest. You will be cool and quiet there, and Magda shall bring you up your tea."

"Oh, papa, please," Hugh said, the tears coming into his eyes. "I have not half done. Burnet and Grant can go on working as many hours as they please. It's too bad that I mayn't. How can you expect me to keep before them if you wont let me work?"

"I don't expect, or wish you to keep before them if you can't do it without injuring your health and breaking rules. I have told you often that the work is not to go on all the evening. Go down to the drawing-room, as I bid you, and perhaps if you rest your head to-night you may be able to finish your work to-morrow morning before school time. Now, Ratcliffe, what is this I hear you have been calling your sister?"

"I never called her anything, papa."

"Oh, Ratcliffe," Magda cried, "I heard you say a regular brute of a bee."

"Well, there are bees that are regular brutes."

"Come, come," said Mr. Lord, "no disputing; tell me exactly what you did say, Ratty."

Ratcliffe stuck his chin in, and gabbled down into his waistcoat as fast as he could get out the words:

"There was an old man in a tree.  
Who was horribly bored by a bee,  
When they said, 'Does it buzz?'  
He replied 'Yes, it does,  
It's a regular brute of a bee.'"

At the end he looked up, and was a good deal relieved to see the beginning of a smile on his father's usually grave face.

"I am very sorry Magda brought you up stairs to hear such nonsense, dear papa," Beatrice said, sweetly. "That really was all Ratcliffe said, and I don't suppose he meant anything by it."

"It does not seem to mean much, certainly," Mr. Lord answered. "Magda should be careful not to exaggerate when she makes complaints. At the same time I am afraid you have been very troublesome and noisy this afternoon, Ratcliffe."

"There is nothing else to be here," said Ratcliffe, glancing round the room, which certainly, with all the chairs overturned, and the contents of the tables and bookshelves scattered on the floor, did present a very forlorn appearance.

"Hm! Well, it certainly does seem a pity for you all to be shut up in this close room on such a fine evening. If you can assure me, Ratty, that you have done all your work for to-morrow satisfactorily, and that you had finished it by six o'clock, I will desire John to bring the pony round, and you can ride for an hour after tea."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, papa; I had done my work before six."

"All your work, and thoroughly?"

"Yes, yes," cried Ratty, eagerly; and then at a little anxious pull of the jacket from Kathy, he added: "as thoroughly, at least, as the stupid stuff *would* do."

But Mr. Lord had turned away and was ringing the schoolroom bell, so the muttered explanation was rather lost upon him.

## CHAPTER II.

KATHLEEN.

TEA for the schoolroom party was always served in a little room down stairs, only divided by folding doors from the dining-room, where Mr. Lord and Beatrice dined at the same hour the children had tea. It was always a hasty meal; there must not be any chatter, for every sound could be heard distinctly through the folding doors; and since Magda had presided instead of Beatrice, and there had been no kind mother to come in just as the children were seating themselves, to look round and see that all was comfortable, no one had found the tea-table pleasant enough to wish to linger over it. Magda always brought a book with her, to read as she made tea, and it was a chance whether the children had to drink hot water with a little milk in it, or tea flavoured with salt instead of sugar. She rarely heard when they complained, and still more rarely took any notice of the silent skirmishing that went on over the bread and butter plates between Tom and Ratty, or of the latter's raids on the sugar basin, and Kathy's efforts to guard it from him, efforts which often occupied her so much as to prevent her from getting anything to eat herself.

On that Friday evening tea was hurried over even more quickly than usual; no one but Tom seemed to have any appetite for the bread and butter. Magda was cross to Kathy, and would not let her help to carry Hugh's tea to the drawing-room. Ratty was too excited at the prospect of his ride to keep still for more than a minute at a time, and Kathleen, instead of sharing his joy, as was generally the case when any good fortune had fallen to his share, sat silent, balancing her teaspoon on the edge of her cup with as grave a look on her round rosy face as it could be made to wear. When the pony was brought to the door, she followed Ratcliffe into the hall to see him ride off, and he reproached her with her want of sympathy.

"You need not look so glum just when I am particularly pleased," he said; "it's not like you. I never would have believed that you would have turned a spiteful cat, like that."

"Oh, my dear Ratty, I'm not spiteful; I'm your faithful Kat, just as usual, only I do so wish papa had not happened to say

*thoroughly*, or that we had looked a little longer for that nominative case. It does not seem quite fair, does it?"

"Rubbish," said Ratcliffe; "what a bore you are, coming and putting disagreeable thoughts in one's head, and spoiling one's fun. You might just as well have let me enjoy my ride, as I was to have it."

"Oh, I did not know you *could*," said Kathy; "I fancied you would be thinking about that '*thoroughly*' all the time, and what I came out to say was, that I would get the books while you are away, and have a try to make out the meaning better. Sense and nominative cases do pop into one's head quite unexpectedly sometimes, if one waits for them. If the preparation is done thoroughly well at last, it wont seem so bad, will it?"

"I don't know," said Ratcliffe, rather sulkily; "but I do know that I hate fuss. You shan't be my cat any longer, if you are always putting up your back and poking your paw into everything. There's John beckoning to me, the pony wont stand; let me go."

Kathleen looked after the riders till they had reached the end of the square and turned towards the park, and then she rather sadly mounted the stairs to the top of the house, and began her usual evening task of tidying the schoolroom. No one ever thought of putting anything away but Kathleen; and as her arrangements were not very exact, the business of bringing the possessions of the schoolroom inmates to anything like order grew more difficult every day. Having her father's word '*thoroughly*' in her mind that evening, she took more pains than usual; and before settling herself in the window to work at Ratcliffe's lessons, she actually got upon a chair to smooth out some of the crumpled pictures pinned against the wall, and to straighten the illuminated card which their dear mother had hung up above the schoolroom bookshelf a very short time before she was taken ill. Kathleen read the words of the text as she put the card in its place. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

"My hands find so many things to do," she said to herself, as she opened her books in the window-seat; "and the worst of it is, they are generally the wrong things. Things I had better leave alone, and not try to do, though they look so very nice and interesting when they first come into my mind. It really is very puzzling, now that there is



no dear mamma to tell me what to leave alone, and what to do with my might. Madame Von Largerstrom says I am just to do as I am bid, and learn my own lessons, and not interfere and mix myself up with other people. That's what Tommy and Magda do ; they just go straight on with their own business or amusement, and never seem to see what is going on about them, or to know what any one else wants. It does very well for them, I suppose ; but, oh dear ! I don't think it would do for me. Ratcliffe would call me selfish ; he calls me fussy now, but selfish would be worse than fussy. I think I should *feel* selfish, too, and I don't see how things could go on, for there must be some one just to do the little odds and ends that want doing, and to look about and be ready. I wonder which is worst, to make as many mistakes and messes as I do, or to leave things just to take their chance. I wish I knew."

When Kathleen reached this thought, she laid her head down on the great dictionary she had opened on a chair before her, and the sorrowful cry, which was oftener in her heart than any one who saw her merry face could have supposed, rose once more : "Mamma, mamma, darling mamma, why did you die and leave your poor little children. How can we know what to do without you to teach us?" After a minute or two, however, she lifted up her head, wiped the tears from her eyes, found the place in the book, and set to work diligently to make the most of the short hour before bedtime. She had remembered some words their mother had spoken to them during the last Sunday afternoon lessons they had had with her, about the Divine Guide and Helper to whom the youngest child might at any moment turn with certainty of being heard and understood ; and a ray of comfort and strength had come into her heart. She resolved that she would not puzzle herself by thinking about all her difficulties at once. It was at all events clear that Ratcliffe's lesson had better be learned properly, and she determined not to lose the chance of helping him to prepare it in the thorough way her father liked.

She was surprised to find how beautifully the words fitted into each other, and how clear the words became when she gave her mind to what she was doing, and by the time Ratty returned from his ride she was in high spirits at the success of her study. She rushed down stairs to meet him in the hall, calling out : "It's all right, Ratty—I've made it all right ! Dido did not throw away her face or untie her

heart when she went to meet the Teucrans. She did not in reality do anything odd at all, and it all goes as sensibly as possible. Papa wont like to see the books brought down to-night, but I'll call you early in the morning, and show you what lovely sense I've made of it."

[*To be continued.*]

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### MRS. OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES.

THE little old lady lived over the way, through a green gate that shut with a click, and up three white steps. Every morning at eight o'clock the church bell chimed for morning prayer—chim! chime! chim! chime!—and every morning at eight o'clock the little old lady came down the white steps, and opened the gate with a click, and went where the bells were calling.

About this time also little Ida would kneel on a chair at her nursery window in the opposite house to watch the old lady come out and go. The old lady was one of those people who look always the same. Every morning her cheeks looked like faded rose-leaves, and her white hair like a snow wreath in a garden laughing at the last tea-rose. Every morning she wore the same black satin bonnet, and the same white shawl; had delicate gloves on the smallest of hands, and gathered her skirt daintily up from the smallest of feet. Every morning she carried a clean pocket-handkerchief, and a fresh rose in the same hand with her Prayer-book; and as the Prayer-book being bound up with the Bible was thick as well as handsome, she seemed to have some difficulty in so doing. Every morning, whatever the weather might be, she stood outside the green gate, and looked up at the sky to see if this were clear, and down at the ground to see if that were dry; and so went where the bells were calling.

Ida knew the little old lady quite well by sight, but she did not know her name. Perhaps Ida's great-uncle knew it; but he was a grave, unsociable man who saw very little of his neighbours, so perhaps he did not; and Ida stood too much in awe of him to trouble him with

idle questions. She had once asked Nurse, but Nurse did not know; so the quiet orphan child asked no more. She made up a name for the little old lady herself, however, after the manner of Mr. John Bunyan, and called her Mrs. Overtheday; and morning after morning, though the bread and milk breakfast smoked upon the table, she would linger at the window, beseeching—

“One minute more, dear Nurse! Please let me wait till Mrs. Overtheday has gone to church.”

And when the little old lady had come out and gone, Ida would creep from her perch, and begin her breakfast. Then, if the chimes went on till half the basinful was eaten, little Ida would nod her head contentedly, and whisper:

“Mrs. Overtheday was in time.”

Little Ida's history was a sad one. Her troubles began when she was but a year old, with the greatest of earthly losses—for then her mother died, leaving a sailor husband and their infant child. The sea-captain could face danger, but not an empty home; so he went back to the winds and the waves, leaving his little daughter with relations. Six long years had he been away, and Ida had had many homes, and yet, somehow, no home, when one day the postman brought her a large letter, with her own name written upon it in a large hand. This was no old envelope sealed up again—no make-believe epistle to be put into the post through the nursery door; it was a real letter, with a real seal, real stamps, and a great many post-marks; and when Ida opened it there were two sheets written by the Captain's very own hand, in round fat characters, easy to read, with a sketch of the Captain's very own ship at the top, and, most welcome above all, the news that the Captain's very own self was coming home.

“I shall have a papa all to myself very soon, Nurse,” said Ida. “He has written a letter to me, and made me a picture of his ship; it is the *Bonne Esperance*, which he says means Good Hope. I love this letter better than anything he has ever sent me.”

Nevertheless, Ida took out the carved fans and workboxes, the beads, and handkerchiefs, and feathers, the dainty foreign treasures the sailor-father had sent to her from time to time; dusted them, kissed them, and told them that the Captain was coming home. But the letter she wore in her pocket by day, and kept under her pillow by night.

"Why don't you put your letter into one of your boxes, like a tidy young lady, Miss Ida?" said Nurse. "You'll wear it all to bits doing as you do."

"It will last till the Captain comes home," said Miss Ida.

It had need then to have been written on the rock, graven with an iron pen for ever; for the Bonne Esperance (like other earthly hopes) had perished to return no more. She foundered on her homeward voyage, and went down into the great waters, whilst Ida slept through the stormy night, with the Captain's letter beneath her pillow.

Alas! Alas! Alas!

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Two or three months had now passed away since Ida became an orphan. She had become accustomed to the crape-hung frock; she had learnt to read the Captain's letter as the memorial of a good hope which it had pleased God to disappoint; she was fairly happy again. It was in the midst of that new desolation in her lonely life that she had come to stay with her great-uncle, and had begun to watch the doings of the little old lady who lived over the way. When dolls seemed vanity, and Noah's Ark a burden, it had been a quiet amusement, demanding no exertion, to see what little she could see of the old lady's life, and to speculate about what she could not; to wonder and fancy what Mrs. Overtheday looked like without her bonnet, and what she did with herself when she was not at church. Ida's imagination did not carry her far. She believed her friend to be old, immeasurably old, indefinitely old; and had a secret faith that she had never been otherwise. She felt sure that she wore a cap indoors, and that it was a nicer one than Nurse's; that she had real tea, with sugar and cream, instead of milk and water, and hot toast rather than bread and treacle for tea; that she helped herself at meals, and went to bed according to her own pleasure and convenience; was—perhaps on these very grounds—utterly happy, and had always been so.

"I am only a little girl," said Ida, as she pressed her face sadly to the cold window-pane. "I am only a little girl, and very sad, you know, because Papa was drowned at sea; but Mrs. Overtheday is very old, and always happy, and so I love her."

And in this there was both philosophy and truth.

It is a mistake to suppose that the happiness of others is always a distasteful sight to the sad at heart. There are times in which life



seems shorn of interests and bereaved of pleasure, when it is a relief, almost amounting to consolation, to believe that any one is happy. It is some feeling of this nature, perhaps, which makes the young so attractive to the old. It soothes like the sound of harmonious music, the sight of harmonious beauty. It is a witness to the conviction which lies deep even in the most afflicted soul that (come what may) all things were created good, and man made to be blessed, before which sorrow and sighing flee away.

It was this in part which formed the attraction for Ida in the little old lady who lived over the way. That green gate shut in a life of which the child knew nothing, and which consequently seemed one of mysterious delight; to believe that such things could be was consoling, and to imagine them was real entertainment. Ida would sometimes draw a chair quietly to the table beside her own, and fancy that Mrs. Overtheday was having tea with her. She would ask the old lady if she had been in time for church that morning, beg her to take off her bonnet, and apologise politely for the want of hot tea and toast. So far all was well, for Ida could answer any of these remarks on Mrs. Overtheday's behalf; but it may be believed that after a certain point this one-sided conversation flagged. One day Nurse overheard Ida's low murmurs.

"What are you talking about, Miss Ida?" said she.

"I am pretending to have Mrs. Overtheday to tea," said Ida.

"Little girls shouldn't pretend what's not true," replied Nurse, in whose philosophy fancy and falsehood were not distinguished. "Play with your dolls, my dear, and don't move the chairs out of their places."

With which Nurse carried off the chair into a corner as if it had been a naughty child, and Ida gave up her day-dream with a sigh; since to have prolonged the fancy that Mrs. Overtheday was present, she must have imagined her borne off at the crisis of the meal after a fashion not altogether consistent with an old lady's dignity.

Summer passed, and winter came on. There were days when the white steps looked whiter than usual; when the snowdrift came half-way up the little green gate, and the snow-flakes came softly down with a persistency which threatened to bury the whole town. Ida knew that on such days Mrs. Overtheday could not go out; but whenever it was tolerably fine the old lady appeared as usual, came daintily down



the steps and went where the bells were calling Chim! chime! chim! chime! sounding so near through the frosty air, that Ida could almost have fancied that the church was coming round through the snowy streets to pick up the congregation.

Mrs. Overtheday looked much the same in winter as in summer. She seemed as fresh and lively as ever; carried her Prayer-book and handkerchief in the same hand; was only more warmly wrapped up, and wore fur-lined boots which were charming. There was one change, however, which went to Ida's heart. The little old lady had no longer a flower to take to church with her. At Christmas she took a sprig of holly, and after that a spray of myrtle, but Ida felt that these were poor substitutes for a rose. She knew that Mrs. Overtheday had flowers somewhere, it is true, for certain pots of forced hyacinths had passed through the little green gate to the Christmas church decorations; but one's winter garden is too precious to be cropped as recklessly as summer rose-bushes, and the old lady went flowerless to church and enjoyed her bulbs at home. But the change went to Ida's heart.

Spring was early that year. At the beginning of February there was a good deal of snow on the ground, it is true, but the air became milder and milder, and towards the end of the month there came a real spring day, and all the snow was gone.

"You may go and play in the garden, Miss Ida," said Nurse, and Ida went.

She had been kept indoors for a long time by the weather and by a cold, and it was very pleasant to get out again, even when the only amusement was to run up and down the shingly walks and wonder how soon she might begin to garden, and whether the gardener could be induced to give her a piece of ground sufficiently extensive to grow a crop of mustard and cress in the form of a capital I. It was the kitchen garden into which Ida had been sent. At the far end it was cut off from the world by an overgrown hedge with large gaps at the bottom, through which Ida could see the high road, a trough for watering horses, and beyond this a wood. The hedge was very thin in February, and Ida had a good view in consequence, and sitting on a stump in the sunshine she peered through the gap to see if any horses came to drink. It was as good as a peep-show, and indeed much better.

"The snow has melted," gurgled the water, "Here I am." It was

everywhere. The sunshine made the rich green mosses look dry, but in reality they were wet, and so was everything else. Slish! slosh! Put your feet where you would the water was everywhere. It filled the stone trough, which, being old, and grey, and steady, kept it still, and bade it reflect the blue sky and the gorgeous mosses; but the trough soon overflowed, and then the water slipped over the side, and ran off in a wayside stream. "Winter is gone!" it spluttered as it ran. "Winter is gone, winter-is-gone, winterisgone!" And, on the principle that a good thing cannot be said too often, it went on with this all through the summer, till the next winter came and stopped its mouth with icicles. As the stream chattered, so the birds in the wood sang,—Tweet! tweet! chirrup! thristle! Spring! Spring! Spring!—and they twittered from tree to tree, and shook the bare twigs with melody; whilst a single blackbird, sitting still upon a bough below, sang "Life!" "Life!" "Life!" with the loudest pipe of his throat, because on such a day it was happiness only to be alive.

It was like a wonderful fairy-tale, to which Ida listened with clasped hands.

Presently another song came from the wood; it was a hymn sung by children's voices, such as one often hears carolled out by a troop of little urchins coming home from school. The words fell familiarly on Ida's ears:

Quite through the streets, with silver sound,  
The flood of life doth flow;  
Upon whose banks on every side  
The wood of life doth grow.

The gardens and the gallant walks  
Continually so green;  
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers  
As nowhere else are seen.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,  
And evermore do spring;  
There evermore the Angels sit,  
And evermore do sing.

Here the little chorus broke off, and the children came pouring out of the wood with chattering and laughter. Only one lingered, playing under a tree, and finishing the song. The child's voice rose shrill and clear like that of the blackbird above him. He also sang of Life—



Eternal Life—knowing little more than the bird of the meaning of his song, and having little less of that devotion of innocence in which happiness is praise.

But Ida had ceased to listen to the singing. Her whole attention was given to the children as they scampered past the hedge, dropping bits of moss and fungi and such like woodland spoil. For, tightly held in the grubby hands of each—plucked with reckless indifference to bud and stalk, and fading fast in their hot prisons—were primroses Ida started to her feet, a sudden idea filling her brain. The birds were right, Spring had come, and there were flowers—*flowers for Mrs. Overthway*.

Ida was a very quiet, obedient little girl as a general rule; indeed, in her lonely life she had small temptation to pranks or mischief of any kind. She had often been sent to play in the back garden before, and had never thought of straying beyond its limits; but to-day a strong new feeling had been awakened by the sight of the primroses.

"The hole is very large," said Ida, looking at the gap in the hedge, "if that dead root in the middle were pulled up, it would be wonderfully large."

She pulled the root up, and, though wonderful is a strong term, the hole was certainly larger.

"It is big enough to put one's head through," said Ida, and, stooping down, she exemplified the truth of her observation.

"Where the head goes, the body will follow," they say, and Ida's little body was soon on the other side of the hedge; the adage says nothing about clothes however, and part of Ida's dress was left behind. It had caught on the stump as she scrambled through. But accidents will happen, and she was in the road, which was something.

"It is like going into the world to seek one's fortune," she thought. "Thus Gerda went to look for little Kay, and so Jorinel sought for the enchanted flower. One always comes to a wood."

And into the wood she came. Dame Nature had laid down her new green carpets, and everything looked lovely; but, as has been before said, it certainly was damp. The little singer under the tree cared no more for this, however, than the blackbird above him.

"Will you tell me, please, where you got your primroses?" asked Ida.

The child made a quaint, half-military salute, and smiled.



"Yonder," he said laconically, and, pointing up the wood, went on with the song that he could not understand :

Ah, my sweet home, Jerusalem,  
Would God I were in thee !  
Would God my woes were at an end,  
The joys that I might see !

Ida went on and on, looking about her as she ran. Presently the wood sloped downwards, and pretty steeply, so that it was somewhat of a scramble ; yet still she kept a sharp look-out, but no primroses did she see, except a few here and there upon the ground, which had been plucked too close to their poor heads to be held in anybody's hands. These shewed the way, however, and Ida picked them up in sheer pity and carried them with her.

"This is how Hop-o-my-thumb found his way home," she thought.

At the bottom of the hill ran a little brook, and on the opposite side of the brook was a bank, and on the top of the bank was a hedge, and under the hedge were the primroses. But the brook was between !

Ida looked and hesitated. It was too wide to jump across, and here, as elsewhere, there was more water than usual. To turn back, however, was out of the question. Gerda would not have been daunted in her search by coming to a stream, nor would any one else that ever was read of in fairy tales. It is true that in Fairy-land there are advantages which cannot always be reckoned upon by common-place children in this common-place world. When the straw, the coal, and the bean came to a rivulet in their travels, the straw laid himself across as a bridge for the others, and had not the coal been a degree too hot on that unlucky occasion, they might (for anything Ida knew to the contrary) still have been pursuing their journey in these favourable circumstances. But a travelling-companion who expands into a bridge on an emergency is not to be met with every day ; and as to poor Ida—she was alone. She stood first on one leg and then on the other, she looked at the water, and then at the primroses, and then at the water again, and at last perceived that in one place there was a large, flat, moss-covered stone in the middle of the stream which stood well out of the water, and from which—could she but reach it—she might scramble to the opposite bank. But how to reach it? that nice, large, secure, comfortable-looking stone.



"I must put some more stones," thought Ida. There were plenty in the stream, and Ida dragged them up, and began to make a ford by piling them together. It was chilly work, for a cloud had come over the sun; and, moreover, Ida was slightly alarmed by the fresh-water shrimps, and some queer, many-legged beasts, who shot off the stones as she lifted them. At last the ford was complete. Ida stepped daintily over the bridge she had made, and jumped triumphantly on to the big stone. Alas! for trusting to appearances. The stone that looked so firm, was insecurely balanced below, and at the first shock one side went down with a splash, and Ida went with it. What a triumph for the shrimps! She scrambled to the bank, however, made up a charming bunch of primroses, and turned to go home. Never mind how she got back across the brook. We have all waded streams before now, and very good fun it is in June, but rather chilly work in February; and, in spite of running home, Ida trembled as much with cold as with excitement when she stood at last before Mrs. Overtheday's green gate.

Click! Ida went up the white steps, marking them sadly with her wet feet, and gave a valiant rap. The door was opened, and a tall, rather severe-looking, housekeeper asked:

"What do you want, my dear?"

A shyness, amounting to terror, had seized upon Ida, and she could hardly find voice to answer.

"If you please, I have brought these for——"

For whom? Ida's pale face burnt crimson as she remembered that after all she did not know the little old lady's name. Perhaps the severe housekeeper was touched by the sight of the black frock, torn as it was, for she said kindly:

"Don't be frightened, my dear. What do you want?"

"These primroses," said Ida, who was almost choking. "They are for Mrs. Overtheday to take to church with her. I am very sorry, if you please, but I don't know her name, and I call her Mrs. Overtheday because you know she lives over the way. At least——" Ida added, looking back across the road with a sudden confusion in her ideas, "at least—I mean—you know—we live over the way." And overwhelmed with shame at her own stupidity, Ida stuffed the flowers into the woman's hand, and ran off home as if a lion were at her heels.

"WELL! Miss Ida," began Nurse, as Ida opened the nursery door (and there was something terrible in her "well"); "if I ever——" and Nurse

seized Ida by the arm, which was generally premonitory of her favourite method of punishment—"a good shaking." But Ida clung close and flung her arms round Nurse's neck.

"Don't shake me, Nursey, dear," she begged, "my head aches so. I have been very naughty I know. I've done everything you can think of; I've crept through the hedge, and been right through the wood, and made a ford, and tumbled into the brook, and waded back, and run all the way home, and been round by the town for fear you should see me. And I've done something you could never, never think of if you tried till next Christmas, I've got some flowers for Mrs. Overtheday, only I did it so stupidly; she will think me a perfect goose, and perhaps be angry," and the tears came into Ida's eyes.

"She'll think you a naughty, troublesome child as you are," said Nurse, who seldom hesitated to assume the responsibility of any statement that appeared to be desirable; "you're mad on that old lady, I think. Just look at that dress!"

Ida looked, but her tears were falling much too fast for her to have a clear view of anything, and the torn edges of the rent seemed fringed with prismatic colours.

To crown all she was sent to bed. In reality, this was to save the necessity of wearing her best frock till the other was mended, and also to keep her warm in case she should have caught cold; but Nurse spoke of it as a punishment, and Ida wept accordingly. Which was a triumph of that not uncommon line of nursery policy which consists in elaborately misleading the infant mind for good.

Chim! chime! went the bells next morning, and Mrs. Overtheday came down the white steps and through the green gate with a bunch of primroses in her hand. She looked up as usual, but not to the sky. She looked to the windows of the houses over the way, as if she expected some one to be looking for her. There was no face to be seen, however; and in the house directly opposite, one of the upper blinds was drawn down. Ida was ill.

How long she was ill, and what was the matter with her, Ida had no very clear idea. She had visions of toiling through the wood over and over again, looking vainly for something that could never be found; of being suddenly surrounded and cut off by swollen streams; and of crawling, unclean beasts with preternatural feelers who got into her boots. Then these heavy dreams cleared away in part, and the stream

seemed to ripple like the sound of church bells, and these chimed out the old tune

“Quite through the streets, with silver sound,” &c.

And then, at last, she awoke one fine morning to hear the sweet chim-chiming of the church bells, and to see Nurse sitting by her bed side. She lay still for a few moments to make quite sure, and then asked in a voice so faint that it surprised herself.

“Has Mrs. Overtheday gone to church?”

On which, to her great astonishment, Nurse burst into tears. For this was the first reasonable sentence that poor Ida had spoken for several days.

To be very ill is not pleasant; but the slow process of getting back strength is often less pleasant still. One afternoon Ida knelt in her old place at the window. She was up, but might not go out, and this was a great grief. The day had been provokingly fine, and even now, though the sun was setting, it seemed inclined to make a fresh start, so bright was the re-juvenated glow with which it shone upon the opposite houses, and threw a mystic glory over Mrs. Overtheday's white steps and green railings. Oh! how Ida had wished to go out that afternoon! How long and clear the shadows were! It seemed to Ida that whoever was free to go into the open air could have nothing more to desire. “Out of doors” looked like Paradise to the drooping little maid, and the passers-by seemed to go up and down the sunny street in a golden dream. Ida gazed till the shadows lengthened, and crept over the street and up the houses; till the sunlight died upon the railings, and then upon the steps, and at last lingered for half an hour in bright patches among the chimney-stacks, and then went out altogether, and left the world in shade.

Twilight came on and Ida sat by the fire, which rose into importance now that the sunshine was gone; and, moreover, spring evenings are cold.

Ida felt desolate, and, on the whole, rather ill-used. Nurse had not been upstairs for hours, and though she had promised real tea and toast this evening, there were no signs of either as yet. The poor child felt too weak to play, and reading made her eyes ache. If only there were some one to tell her a story.

It grew dark, and then steps came outside the door, and a fumbling with the lock which made Ida nervous.

"Do come in, Nursey!" she cried.

The door opened, and some one spoke; but the voice was not the voice of Nurse. It was a sweet, clear, gentle voice; musical, though no longer young; such a voice as one seldom hears and never forgets, which came out of the darkness, saying:

"It is not Nurse, my dear; she is making the tea, and gave me leave to come up alone. I am Mrs. Overtheway."

And there in the firelight stood the little old lady, as she has been before described, except that instead of her Prayer-book she carried a large pot hyacinth in her two hands.

"I have brought you one of my pets, my dear," said she, "I think we both love flowers."

The little old lady had come to tea. This was charming. She took off her bonnet, and her cap more than fulfilled Ida's expectations, although it was nothing smarter than a soft mass of tulle, tied with white satin strings. But what a face looked out of it! Mrs. Overtheway's features were almost perfect. The beauty of her eyes was rather enhanced by the blue shadows that Time had painted round them, and they were those good eyes which remind one of a clear well, at the bottom of which he might see truth. When young she must have been exquisitely beautiful, Ida thought. She was lovely still.

In due time Nurse brought up tea, and Ida could hardly believe that her fancies were realized at last; indeed more than realized—for no bread and treacle diminished the dignity of the entertainment; and Nurse would as soon have thought of carrying off the Great Mogul on his cushions, as of putting Mrs. Overtheway and her chair into the corner.

But there is a limit even to the space of time for which one can enjoy tea and buttered toast. The tray was carried off, the hyacinth put in its place, and Ida curled herself up in an easy-chair on one side of the fire, Mrs. Overtheway being opposite.

"You see I am over the way still," laughed the little old lady.

Now, tell me all about the primroses." So Ida told everything, and apologized for her awkward speeches to the housekeeper.

"I don't know your name yet," said she.

"Call me Mrs. Overtheway still, my dear, if you please," said the little old lady. "I like it."

So Ida was no wiser on this score.



"I was so sorry to hear that you had been made ill on my account," said Mrs. Overtheday. "I have been many times to ask after you, and to-night I asked leave to come to tea. I wish I could do something to amuse you, you poor little invalid. I know you must feel dull."

Ida's cheeks flushed.

"If you would only tell me a story," she said, "I do so like hearing Nurse's stories. At least she has only one, but I like it. It isn't exactly a story either, but it is about what happened in her last place. But I am rather tired of it. There's Master Henry—I like him very much, he was always in mischief; and there's Miss Adelaide, whose hair curled naturally—at least with a damp brush—I like her; but I don't have much of them; for nurse generally goes off about a quarrel she had with the cook, and I never could tell what they quarrelled about, but nurse said cook was full of malice and deceitfulness, so she left. I'm rather tired of it."

"What sort of a story shall I tell you?" asked Mrs. Overtheday.

"A true one, I think," said Ida. "Something that happened to you yourself, if you please. You must remember a great many things, being so old."

And Ida said this in simple good-faith, believing it to be a compliment.

"It is quite true," said Mrs. Overtheday, "that one remembers many things at the end of a long life, and that they are often those things which happened a long while ago, and which are sometimes so slight in themselves that it's wonderful that they should not have been forgotten. I remember, for instance, when I was about your age, an incident that occurred which gave me an intense dislike to a particular shade of brown satin. I hated it then, and at the end of more than half a century, I hate it still. The thing in itself was a mere folly; the people concerned in it have been dead for many years, and yet at the present time I should find considerable difficulty in seeing the merits of a person who should dress in satin of that peculiar hue."

"What was it?" asked Ida.

"It was not amber satin, and it was not snuff-coloured satin; it was a shade of brown known by the name of *feuille-morte*, or dead leaf colour. It is pretty in itself, and yet I dislike it."

"How funny," said Ida, wriggling in the arm-chair with satisfaction. "Do tell me about it."

"But it is not funny in the least, unfortunately," said Mrs. Overthaway, laughing. "It isn't really a story either. It is not even like Nurse's experiences. It is only a strong remembrance of my childhood, that isn't worth repeating, and could hardly amuse you."

"Indeed, indeed it would," said Ida. "I like the sound of it. Satin is so different from cooks."

Mrs. Overthaway laughed.

"Still, I wish I could think of something more entertaining," said she.

"Please tell me that," said Ida, earnestly. "I would rather hear something about you than anything else."

There was no resisting this loving argument. Ida felt she had gained her point, and curled herself up into a listening attitude accordingly. The hyacinth stood in solemn sweetness as if it were listening also; and Mrs. Overthaway putting her little feet upon the fender to warm, began the story of

Mrs. Moss.

J. H. G.

[*To be continued.*]

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## THE PRINCE OF SLEONA.

OF all the countries in the wide world, there was none so beautiful, so delightful, or so happy (in the days of which I am speaking), as the Island of Sleona. You will not find it now in any map under this name; but that is of no consequence. It is enough for us to know that it lay in a southern ocean, a long way from any other land, far out of the track of ships. Its climate was perfection. The greatest heats of summer were never oppressive. From the middle of the day till towards sunset it was pleasant for those who were not obliged to work, to sit about and recline at their ease in shady rooms opening upon gardens, with the large windows all thrown wide, and now and then a gentle sea-breeze coming softly through, just making curtains move and rustle, and bringing the scent of the flowers, the hum of insects, and an occasional note or two from the birds, who, having been awake and about earlier than the people, were nearly all,

at that hour, resting too. But even at this time of year those who were obliged to labour could easily do so without inconvenience, either in the fields or in the towns. As for winter, there was none, properly speaking; there used to be fresh, cool days at that season, with glorious showers at night, which made the earth green, and caused the trees, shrubs, and flowers, to grow and bud. But there was no time of the year when all vegetation appeared withered and dead, as is the case here; and one could hardly say in which month there was the greatest variety of flowers and fruits—there were some peculiar to each, and it was difficult to say which were the best. There was very little rain during summer, but that did not matter, as, at this season, all the streams and rivers were kept fully supplied by the melting of the snow upon a high mountain which stood in the centre of the island, forming at all times a beautiful object in the landscape. It was only upon this mountain, which was very high, that any snow was ever seen in Sleona.

The people of the island were, perhaps, the happiest people on the face of the earth. Their climate and soil were such that they had everything they wanted, with very little trouble. They had been ruled for ages by a family of singularly wise and just princes, and had an old-established system of laws and customs, which had been found to work so well that hardly anything ever went wrong among them. But of all the princes recorded in their history none could be found to compare with their present ruler, King Loroio. His rule was so just and perfect, he had such rare qualities, was so universally accomplished, and so acceptable to, and beloved by, all classes in the kingdom, that the like had never been known. To begin with, he was thoroughly acquainted with all the laws and customs of the island, and added to this knowledge profound insight into human nature, and a wonderful tact in dealing with all sorts of people; so that when any cases of difficulty were brought to him for his decision (as was the custom when the chief magistrates and judges had any doubts about the laws), he always settled them in such a way as to excite the wonder, admiration, and delight of every one concerned. There was nothing done in the whole kingdom in which he did not take an interest, besides practically understanding it to its minutest details. He was always active, and apparently never weary, and when he was not employed in matters of state or government, he occupied

himself with arts and sciences, and at times even with amusements of a lighter kind. And there was nothing he attempted which he did not do well—better, indeed, than any one else in the island.

You would naturally suppose that if ever a man on this earth were happy, it would have been King Loroio. But though he was young, handsome, well, wise, benevolent, accomplished, useful, and beloved, this poor prince was really as miserable as any one in the whole world; far more wretched than the labourers in the fields, who envied while they blessed him as he rode by.

The reason of this was that King Loroio had done something which he ought not to have done, knowing quite well when he did it that he ought not to have done it. What this was, you will find out by-and-by; and you will see that, though it was known only to himself, and was a thing which did not concern any one of his people, and was not a breach of any of the customs of the kingdom, and, as far as could be seen, had done nobody any harm, still it was quite enough to make him one of the most unhappy of men, when he otherwise would certainly have been one of the most happy. And here, if you please, we must go back, and begin my hero's history at the beginning.

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Prince Loroio was born when his parents were pretty far advanced in life, and when they had nearly given up all hope of having a successor to the throne. If they had had no son, the kingdom would have gone to a brother of the king, who was on very bad terms with him, and was, besides, a disagreeable creature, and very much disliked by every one. Thus it happened, that this young prince, whose health was very delicate in his youth, was much pampered and indulged by his parents, and, in fact, he was rather what is called a spoilt child. He was allowed to do as he liked about too many things. His nature was good on the whole; but he had only to express a wish or desire, and his parents, who doted upon him, immediately did all they could to gratify it. Now this is a dreadfully bad thing for anybody. Whoever, in this world, thinks that by doing just as he likes he will be happy, successful, and satisfied, will sooner or later find that it wont do. The road to happiness, success, and content, lies quite the other way, and whoever wishes to achieve those three blessings must begin to go in search of them by doing all manner of things which he does not like by any means, but



which he cordially dislikes, and which he would give anything not to have to do. So this young prince had to begin his life in a way which was unfortunate for him, and which led to his having to spend many miserable years.

He did as he liked. Because he found it against the grain to go the proper way to work to learn what was necessary for a young prince to learn who was before long to succeed to the government of such a kingdom as Sleona, he was allowed to amuse himself by acquiring various sorts of learning by no means so necessary, but in which he took far greater interest and pleasure. He had great natural quickness, however, and would all of a sudden, and without any great trouble, master some subject which cost most people a great deal of pains; but what he hated was having to learn or do anything which he was particularly wanted to learn or to do. The moment that this was the case, he took a hatred to that particular branch of learning, and worked quite hard at some other, which he was by no means desired to work at just then. But, in this way, in process of time, he got to know a good deal about a considerable variety of subjects, although it happened that scarcely any of them were those most important for him to know.

Now, when he was about eighteen, the state of his health began to cause himself and every one else very great uneasiness, for he was seized with symptoms which, while they did not appear to betoken any very serious disease, were yet of a nature to give rise to anxiety, all the more so as the doctors evidently did not understand them, and as the different systems of treatment which they tried quite failed to make the prince any better. His appetite and sleep were not bad, but he seemed to have lost all zest for anything; everything became a weariness; he could do nothing for long at a time, nor in a satisfactory manner; whether he tried study, amusement, or rest from all occupation, everything was alike irksome and nearly impossible for him. And at last the doctors, finding their science at fault, advised change of air and scene, as they do still when they don't know what else to try. So the prince travelled all about the island, doing something towards making collections of plants and other natural productions, that being a pursuit of which he had always been fond; and, indeed, it was only to this, and to music (which latter had always been his favourite study of all others), that he now seemed able to devote himself at all, and to those only by fits and starts; for even they seemed

to have no longer the power of pleasing or occupying him to any considerable extent.

He had been staying for some time near a beautiful town of which he was fond, on the sea coast, called Praona, a place where he had been accustomed to spend a good part of the summer and autumn every year, and where the king had allowed him to have a small summer palace fitted up according to his own taste, as his residence. His health, instead of being benefitted by change of air and scene, had got worse and worse, and he had nearly quite given up doing anything at a collection of seaweeds which he had begun, and at a series of songs which he had planned to write, and of which he had finished one or two, and begun one or two more. One lovely morning when he got up he found a letter from his father, telling him all the news of the court, &c., hoping he was enjoying his stay at Praona, and ending as follows:—

“Continue to take great care of your health, dear boy; for the dearest wish of my heart is to see you quite well again, and back with me once more. Above all things, do nothing that you do not like: why should you attempt to do anything that is irksome or unpleasant? Where would be the advantage of being my son if you should be obliged to do anything in the slightest degree repugnant or uncongenial? The day cannot now be very far distant when I shall be called to my fathers, and you will take my place on the throne. You will find the treasury—so-and-so,—(here the king entered into financial details, proving that his riches had latterly immensely increased). It is all for you; and how thankful am I that I can be happy in the thought that my riches and my kingdom are to pass into the hands of one in every way so admirably worthy of them. But health is the first of earthly blessings: may you very speedily be quite restored to the enjoyment of yours. Ah! I too know what it is to be without it. I have been ailing a little at times of late, but am now better again; quite as well as I can expect to be at my age;”—with more to the same purport.

The prince read this letter over, and rested his heavy head upon his hot white hand. He felt worse that morning than he had ever felt as yet. His head was dull and confused; his eyes were dim; there was a weight at his heart, and he had a general sensation of weakness and oppression, of inability to undertake and execute anything, which was

the worse to bear because it was accompanied by a ceaseless desire to be occupied about something, anything, no matter what. He was sitting in his garden pavilion, covered with flowering creepers; the air was sweet with perfume from a thousand blossoms; the birds were making the woods vocal with soft, sweet notes, not singing in the exuberantly rapturous tones which they use in the early year, but in phrases of tranquil happiness, such as they utter in the fulness of early summer; a gentle cadence of the low surf falling rhythmically on the coral beach stole to the ear through the branches—heard, and no more. The prince looked out at the swelling upland, and watched a flock of rose-coloured cockatoos wheeling in their flight between him and a distant grove of dark palms until they shot out of sight.

He shook his head wearily, and sighed.

“Do as I like!” said he. “Alas! if there were but anything that I like to do! In all this beautiful kingdom, which is mine as much as if I sat already on my father’s throne, what is there that can give me a moment’s pleasure? The power of *enjoyment* has left me—of enjoyment, did I say? The power of *doing* seems all but lost. What will become of me? I can hardly even *think* for a few minutes at a time.”

He started up in sudden alarm, and paced hurriedly up and down the garden alleys. A terrible thought had taken possession of him. Should he lose his reason?

He spent a sad day, but towards evening he became calmer, for he resolved that he would compel himself to work steadily for a certain time every day at something which should occupy him and carry him out of himself.

This was an admirable resolution, and I have no doubt that it would have produced the best results. But it was not carried out. Late at night a courier arrived in hot haste to tell him that, the evening before, his father had been seized with a serious illness, and that if he would see him again in life he must hurry back to the palace without a moment’s delay.

So the prince set off at once, forgetting his symptoms and everything but the thought of the dying father; and travelling hard all that night and all next day, about sunset he arrived at the gates of the capital.

Too late! The houses were closed; the guard at the gate turned out with muffled drums, the people were all dressed in white (their mourning colour), and were talking in knots with subdued voices and

looks of sorrow. The king was dead. The prince passed through the silent throngs in the palace halls to the chamber which contained all that he should ever see, on this side the grave, of him who had given him life; whose watchful and constant love for him had never for a moment diminished till his latest breath; whose last faint accents had been made out to be an attempt to pronounce his name.

The prince's sorrow was very profound; his grief could find no words, and, at first, no tears. It was not until after the king's body had been embalmed, and the prince had entered the chamber alone to look upon him for the last time before he should be placed in the richly-sculptured coffin in which he was to rest in the vault of his ancestors, that his grief gave any violent outward manifestation. But then, when he looked at his noble face, where death had seemingly swept away the trace of time, and stamped upon the features a heavenly calm—almost a smile—as of eternal peace and youth, the tears came at length to his relief, and with a cry of “Oh! father, father!” he fell upon his bosom and wept long. Those tears, and this burst of emotion, bitter though they were, yet brought a sense of calm and mournful quiet; and he felt, for the time, as he had not felt for many a long day, almost since he was a boy.

Now, until the king was buried it was the custom of the country that there should be an entire suspension of every kind of business, and this was strictly observed throughout the kingdom. The prince was alone with his sorrow. But on the day after the funeral all avocations were resumed. And on this day the prince's uncle announced that, as the late king had died without leaving any will, and without having notified publicly that Prince Loroio was to be his successor, he assumed the crown and sceptre in virtue of the ancient laws. Now it was quite true that the law did run thus, and it was also true that the late king had never publicly named Prince Loroio as his successor, although every one knew quite well what his intention had been. But the statement that there was no will to be found took every one greatly by surprise.

It was the law that when a monarch died, his nearest of kin present at the time should immediately take possession of the papers contained in a certain private cabinet; and the kings were always to make a will, naming in it the person whom they desired to succeed them; but should no will be made, in that case the nearest of kin, according to



the law of the country, would reign. Now, in Sleona, a brother was considered the nearest of kin, and as every one knew that the late king had wished his son to succeed him, it was considered startling that no will should be found. However, the uncle had proceeded in the established manner; being the nearest of kin at the time of the king's death, he took possession of the papers in the private cabinet, counted them in the presence of the two chief dignitaries of Church and State (who signed their names to a statement of their number, for they were not to be examined or looked into at that time), and took them away with him. He now produced them to the prince; the number of them was correct, but there was no will among them.

It would be difficult to describe the prince's consternation. Such a contingency as this had never entered his mind. Like every one else, he could not believe that there was not a will, and, thinking it might, perhaps, have been deposited elsewhere than in the proper cabinet, he at once proposed to search for it.

"You may search," said the uncle; "but until a will is found naming you the future king, the kingdom is mine; and to-morrow I put on the crown."

And with a sneer and a glance of hatred he clamped out of the hall. Besides being malevolent and unpopular, he was ugly, mean-looking, and a little deformed; one of his legs was shorter than the other, and he wore very thick soles on both boots, the sole of the foot on the short leg being, of course, a good deal thicker than the other.

The prince stood lost in thought, until he heard the trumpets of the heralds who were passing through the streets proclaiming the coronation of his uncle to-morrow at high noon. Chancing to put his hand in the embroidered pouch which was part of his dress, and which happened to be the same he had on when he came in haste to find his father dead, he found in it a piece of crumpled paper. This had been given to him when he arrived. The king had tried to write on it, after his speech had failed, some message, it was thought, some parting counsel or desire, to be given to his son. It had been too late, for the feeble hand and the failing power had only formed a mass of indecipherable strokes, with the exception of a letter or two here and there, and one or two figures. The prince, who had forgotten it, now took it to the light, and looked at it attentively for a long time. He could make nothing intelligible out of it however. The letters and figures

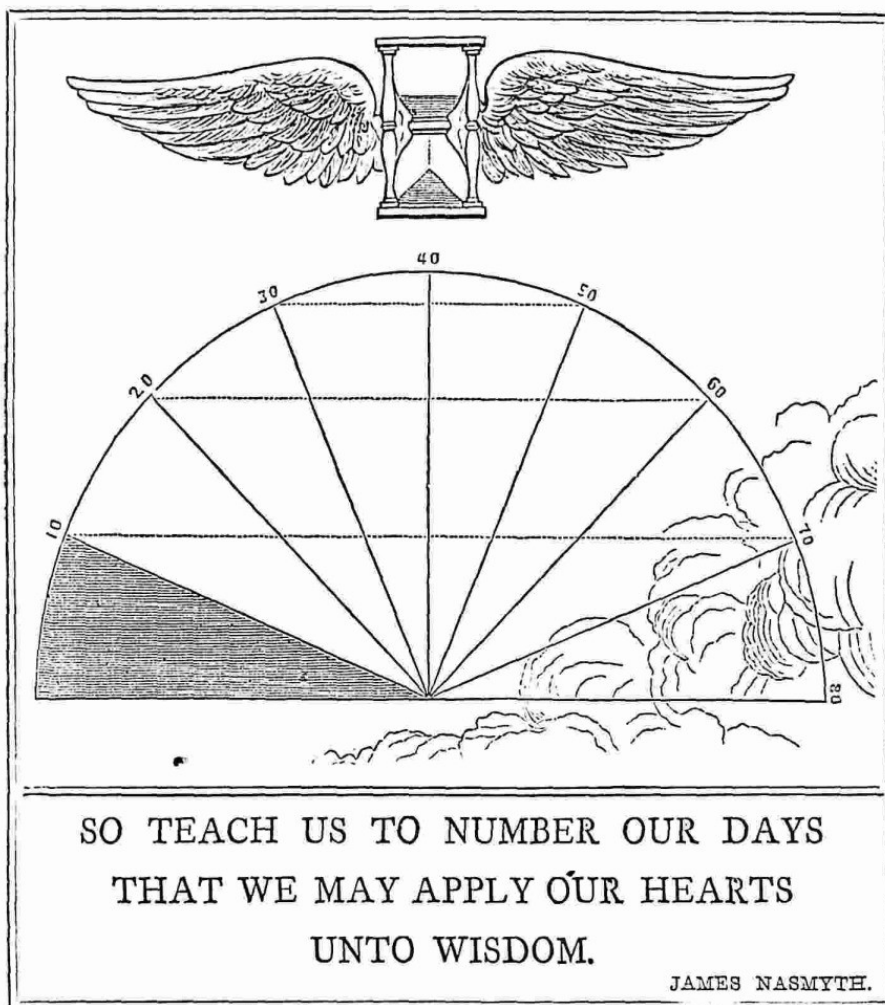
which could be made out were as follow (there were mere strokes and illegible marks where the dots are put) :—

15..PA .... TR ..... UG .. ENT .. CASE ... T ..... LION AT P ... G .. 10.

So, after reverently kissing the scrap, the last thing which his dying father's hand had rested upon, he carefully folded it up, and wrapping it in several coverings, resolved to keep it for ever. Then he put it carefully by, and thought no more about it.

[*To be continued.*]

### THE DIAL OF LIFE.



THIS is a mysterious-looking figure, but it is easily explained. The half-circle represents a man's life, from his first birthday, down in the left corner, to the eightieth one he may possibly live to, in the corner

opposite. Eighty years is the utmost allowance of time a man may reckon upon for doing any active work in the world; and this is the reason why it is given as the limit on this dial. For, what do you think the dial is for? Not so much to remind you young folks of the old age and infirmity and death which must one day come upon us all, as to call your attention to the glorious number of years God gives His creatures to be busy in—to the glorious opportunity you have therefore for doing something in the world: something good at any rate—possibly something great.

Take the case of some young friend who is but ten years old at the present time. We will explain the use of the dial to him.

And first, as he can do nothing now with the years he has already lived, we will shade them over. There! it is done; and now look what a little bit the shaded ten years is to the large space of seventy that lies beyond! Well; the lad has not lost much of his time yet, however little he may have accomplished. Besides, a boy is such a little boy up to ten years old, that very little is expected of him. Obedience and love, that is all. If he has allowed himself to be guided hitherto by others in his duties to God and man, it is enough; he has done all he ought to have done, and might sleep in peace if the end was to come now.

But as it is not, only see what lies before him! How many years of that beautiful white space of unused time, from the figure of 10 to the figure of 80! he cannot indeed tell, but possibly numbers and numbers of years, which it would take ever so long to count, even. Each of them a whole long year, as children feel it. A year of months, and weeks, and days, and hours, which sometimes hang so heavy on hand, one wants to hurry them on. Then think of heaps and heaps of such years; and, oh, happy ten-year-old child, ask yourself what you will do with them. Each man's life, you know—that is, each man's time on earth—is a gift of God, given him to do something with. We are none of us—no, not one—drifted into the world to toss up and down and tumble about by chance, like little bits of stick afloat on a river, till the great tide carries us away. No, for some mysterious reason God sends everybody into the world to do some special work; and you have yours, depend upon it; and day by day it will come under your hands to be done. Be sure, then, that what “your hand findeth to do” you do; and to remind yourself of this, as the years pass over, shade off each

into the dead years, in which you can do nothing further, so that you may not deceive yourself as to how much remains. To every one living a white space does remain, and it is never too late to be up and doing. See, now, the Dial of Life is a Dial of Life indeed—a dial of hope, a dial of promise. From the earliest ages the circle has been an emblem of eternity. Here, then, is but a portion of it; the trial portion—the working portion. Work uprightly, and you need not fear what comes after. As to those clouds that you see coming up against the 80 in the right-hand corner, like all other clouds, they do but hide the heaven beyond.

EDITOR.

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### CORAL.

IN devoting a corner of “Aunt Judy’s Magazine” to natural history, the puzzle is, where to begin, what to choose; what branch, or what twig of a branch, to select as a subject likely to be acceptable to our young friends. A systematic “beginning at the beginning” is out of the question, so we purpose dropping down on the first topic that comes to hand. And this happens to be *Coral*, because in one of the tales in this number, coral is mentioned, and a dispute arises as to the claim of coral-islands to a definite place in one of the four old-fashioned kingdoms of the world, “fire, earth, air, and water.”

In telling children something about coral, too, we are talking to them of a thing they know well by sight and touch already. Most children possess or have seen coral necklaces, or little coral charms, or perhaps even one of the fine old coral rattles given to babies to rub against their poor gums in teething-pain, and which, being ornamented with silver bells, is a favourite toy, even after the tooth is cut, and the coral end is not wanted.

Now then, this coral—the pretty pink or red stuff of which trinkets are made—is a substance which in common parlance people say “grows” in deep water in several seas; the Mediterranean chiefly, but also in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and some others. It grows in a tree-like, *i.e.* branched manner, in little stiff bushes on the rocks at the



bottom of these seas, or from the roofs and sides of submarine grottoes, and this at a depth of water varying from 350 to 600 feet from the surface. And a large coral bush of this sort will sometimes grow till it is twelve or even sixteen inches high, but after that it grows no more.

Now, when you think of the number of coral trinkets to be seen even in one jeweller's shop-window, it is clear that, let the material grow ever so deep at the bottom of the sea, men must have found out some regular way of getting at it. And so they have. The "coral fishery," as it is called, is an important branch of trade, and numbers of people gain a livelihood by it in the neighbourhood of those seas where the treasure abounds.

Coral is got at both by diving and dredging, and in many different ways. One common sort of dredge is made of two strong beams of wood fastened together crosswise, with netting attached underneath. This is taken out in a boat, called a "Coralline," by fishermen, who are also practised divers, and who, having reached the coral ground, let down their wooden cross, well weighted with stones, into the sea; one of them following, to drive the arms of the cross about, one after another, into the hollows of the rocks, till the coral bushes are entangled in the netting and broken off; after which the machine with its gatherings is drawn up, and the coral picked out for sale.

Now let us suppose that a twelve-inch high coral bush has been broken off the rock, got out of the sea, and taken to market in this manner. What does the coral fisherman do *next year*? Does he go back to the same place and let down his dredge again, and expect to find the coral bushes re-grown? By no means, for the fisherman, rough sailor though he be, has found out that coral bushes take ten or twelve years to come to that size. Consequently his plan is to clear a neighbourhood at once, and not return to it till the ten or twelve years are over, and he has a reasonable hope of finding new coral bushes in the place of the old ones.

Here you begin to think how slowly a coral bush grows by comparison with most of the bushes in a garden—rose, laurel, laurustinus, azalia—almost any sort you can name, in fact; and you perhaps fancy this may be because they grow in the sea.

But no, that has nothing to do with it. The seaweeds which grow on rocks have many of them as quick a growth as land plants. There

are very large ones which die down and grow again season after season.

The secret is that a coral bush is not a plant, but an animal formation; rather one may call it a *city of animals*; every branch representing a street, along the sides of which the inhabitants have each their own particular home. So a tree might be called a city of animals were the leaves and bark to be gifted with animal instead of vegetable life, and grow limy instead of woody stems and branches for itself.

This may surprise some of you very much, but not every child; for now that those glasses with sea-creatures in them, called "aquariums," have been common, many children have learnt to know one zoophyte well by sight, namely, a sea-anemone, and have heard of other varieties of zoophytes, where a quantity of the same sort of little animals, though infinitely *smaller in size*, live together in a common home, out of the tiny windows or open-fronted cells of which they thrust out those feelers, which learned people call "tentacles." The feelers of a sea-anemone are a well-known sight, but if we could look down into the depths of a coral sea we should see every branch of the coral bushes adorned with rows of somewhat similar feelers; the wart-like cells in which the little animals themselves live, being dotted along the branches at short intervals throughout.

Now, hearing this, you perhaps take hold of your coral beads, look at them, and wonder that you can see no signs of either animals, feelers, or warty cells. No, not now; but when the coral was alive and growing, this beautiful hard substance was covered by a soft fleshy overcoat. And it was in this overcoat the wart-like cells were to be seen, and in these cells the coral animals (or *polyps*, as they are called,—each a miniature sea-anemone,\* with eight feelers round its mouth—) lived. This overcoat is a half slimy, half chalky material when fresh, but dries into a thin, porous, reddish, and at last, powdery incrustation, and is very soon got rid of; a coarse brush or towel being sufficient for the purpose.

By what mysterious power these jelly-like creatures manufacture or "grow" (for after all that is the better phrase) the fine, solid substance

\* The sea-anemone is instanced because so well known, and as giving a general idea of a polyp. Strictly speaking, the coral polyp is more like that of the "Dead Man's Hand" (*Alcyonium digitatum*). But few by comparison have observed this zoophyte alive and in sea-water so as to notice the polyps.

within that overcoat, no human being can explain; neither why, the coral polyp being white, the secretion from it should be coloured. But neither can we explain how we human beings grow our own bones. We have neither will nor power in the matter. Coral is, in fact, the common skeleton of the coral-polyp community. As the fleshy overcoat with its colony of living creatures increases, so the internal, almost marble-like, coral stems increase too. Beyond this we know nothing. But let us pursue their history when left to themselves. By-and-by, when the bush has grown old, its holdfast to the rock is apt to give way. It is injured, perhaps, by accident, or by sea-worms, which have bored holes in it, till it comes loose, and away go the coral branches, a sport to the ever restless waves. And now comes the end. These coral polyps are delicate creatures, and can only exist when stationary and in quiet. Tossed up and down they die; the whole overcoat comes off like a worn-out garment, and the beautiful red stems are left naked and exposed; and these, when thrown ashore after storms, soon fade, or are ground to dust by their everlasting fretting against rocks and stones.

But with this natural fate of coral-tree life man has for long interfered. The fisherman's great object is to get the pretty material in a state of perfection, as its price depends on its condition. He cannot wait for the chance of picking it up, therefore, but must at all risks obtain it from the depths of the sea before worms have pierced it and storms thrown it into the air to fade. Hence the labour and contrivances we have described.

The scientific name of this sort of coral is *Corallium rubrum*, and no less than fifteen varieties of it have been counted up, distinguished by the different tints of red it assumes in different localities. Of coral, historically, we will just say that it was known to the ancients. The Greeks gave it its name "Korallion;" and the Romans hung beads of it on the cradles of new-born infants to preserve them from sickness, it being considered by their soothsayers as a charm. The Gauls used it to ornament their swords, bucklers, and helmets, and doctors prescribed preparations of it for all manner of complaints. Nevertheless, well as all these knew it, they had no suspicion of what it was. Ovid described it as a plant, which remained soft under water, but turned hard on exposure to air; a statement which, at any rate, shows that people had noticed even in his time the soft overcoat we have spoken of.

A later writer (fifteenth century) even classed it among minerals, but the general opinion for centuries was that it was a plant—a plant, too, which flowered under the sea. One writer even described the eight feelers of the polyps as the eight petals of the flowers, which, spreading themselves out on the leafless branches, contrasted beautifully with the brilliant scarlet of the stems to which they were fixed!

Our own traveller, Dr. Shaw, who wrote in 1738, gives another interpretation, for he describes the feelers of the polyps as the roots of the plant, and points out how conveniently they supply in the water the place of the large roots which land plants need to keep them steady “against the violence of wind.”

That these later writers did observe the polyps at all was something; and the discovery of other polyps in both fresh and sea water—all resembling each other by being armed with feelers or tentacles—led by degrees to a right understanding of the animal origin of coral bushes: John Ellis, a London merchant, cotemporary with Linnæus, being the first who demonstrated this truth to the conviction of the public mind.

Here we stop. Our space has run out, and the coral of the coral islands deserves more words than a few lines can possibly contain. It forms a beautiful contrast to the true coral we have been describing. For although the manufacturing animal is still a soft-bodied polyp with feelers, he builds himself here a stony house to live in, and not a stony stem round which to live.

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## NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE.

### THE LITTLE ONES' CORNER.

THE children were seated at an old-fashioned round table in the bay-window; papa and mamma at a square one of the usual sort nearer the fire; he very busy over a large book; she planning and cutting out a new-patterned frock for the baby asleep up-stairs.

This was the fashion of the house. Every evening the children had that table and lights upon it to themselves, and the parents theirs;



and a very good custom it was, I venture to say. For so the young ones learnt to be independent enough to amuse themselves, at the same time that, by belonging to a family party in one room, there was the control of necessary good manners, besides the possibility of an appeal to mamma, whenever they had questions to ask or disputes to be settled. Indeed, occasionally, she would leave papa and join them at their table for a little bit; if, for instance, a new game had to be started, or something very entertaining had to be read aloud, which they wanted to hear without those mistakes and delays at hard words, to which young folks under ten years of age are liable. Of course, too, they came and sat on the hearth-rug whenever they had anything to say, or wanted a good roll over with the dog, or were summoned by papa to listen to something he had invented for their amusement; but their peculiar property and location, as the Americans call it, were in and at the round table. There they were sovereigns altogether.

But here I must have a word with the parents, which children may skip if they please.

In these days when there is a sort of idea afloat that education consists in doing something for or with children all day long, it seems quite desirable to make a stand in the other direction, and assure parents, teachers, and guardians that children can and will amuse themselves, and to very good purpose, too, if you allow them—that is, leave them—to do so. The “shaping power of imagination” is a good deal stronger in them, in proportion to other faculties, than it is in grown-up people, and they ought to be encouraged to use it. What father of sons has not at some time or other found his “Robinson Crusoe” in soaked, mud-covered boots and trousers, steering a leaky half-carpentered raft over the thick waters of an unromantic moat; the boy finding a pleasure instead of a trouble in the necessity of clearing out the water every ten minutes with a threepenny mug, to prevent himself and his bark from fairly foundering among the frogs?

Or what mother of intelligent, legend-loving daughters, has not one day smiled to discover that every stream and coppice within reach of childish walks and childish play has a name and history of its own, of which the grown-up outer world knows nothing? By degrees, she calls the places by those names herself, they have become so familiar; and by-and-by, when the young folks are old enough to have left off such play, she may even hear the whole history of those brief

delusions so certain to over-last most other histories, however important.

Meantime, let her beware of breaking the charm, for in this way, best of all, the children are not only amusing but actually instructing themselves.

But quite apart from the results of reading, the same tendency prevails. The very urchins of the village have the gift. Many a dirt-pie castle has been built up in a gutter, though the architect could tell you nothing about it were he asked, and you might be puzzled to trace the results in his after life. The very babies who sit on door-steps and build potsherds into squares for houses against the wall, have their dreams, though they could not describe them in words.

In fact, children of all ages and classes invent or read of situations, and realize them; having thus half a dozen worlds at command, while we elders, wise or stupid, whichever it may be, sit limited to one.

Let this faculty have its way then. It is given for some good purpose. Leave children to themselves at intervals that they may fight out a character and path of their own. That is to say, let them at times be free to amuse themselves. If you allow them, they will.

So, certainly, did the children I am telling about, who sat at the round table before mentioned. And now, as my lecture is over, the little ones may listen again, for I am going to describe the round table!

It was such an odd one as is not often seen in these days, for it was made on an old-fashioned plan, which did not answer in all respects, though it was very nice in some.

The nice part was that it had four drawers, two long and two short ones; and that it went round on what a globe-maker would call its own axis, in other words, on a pivot, so that wherever you sat you could make the drawer you wanted, come to you, merely by sending the table round with a jerk. This was delightful, and the children used to send things backwards and forwards to each other in this way merely for the fun of the thing, instead of handing them across the table in the regular way. "You want a slate-pencil," cries Barbara to her brother Harry; "here it comes," and the speaker having put a slate-pencil into the drawer nearest her, sends the table spinning to convey it.

In fact these four drawers were an endless source of amusement.

Sometimes the children called them Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; and oh, what games of barter and exchange took place with the imaginary contents of each!

"Europe, what have you got to offer me for my elephants?" asks Asia, in a voice of superiority, leaning back in his chair.

"Doggies—nice, good doggies," murmurs Europe, the smallest of the party.

"I don't want dogs," answers Asia, contemptuously; "nasty scavenger things; I hate them."

"Then pussy-cats," tries the little one again.

"Oh, I've wild cats of my own," replies Asia; "I don't want yours."

"Then mice for your wild cats to eat," cries Missy, with wide-open eyes and a smile; "and I won't have elephants, Asia. I want nice green parrots with long tails."

"As many as you please," shouts Asia. "I've more parrots than enough. Here's a dozen for three dozen mice. Capital sport for my wild cats, and the bargain's a good one for you too. Here they come;" on which whirl went the table till the imaginary twelve parrots reached the little one's lap, and she had packed up and sent off the mice in return.

And so on. Or, sometimes the drawers were to be the four elements of old-fashioned teaching—fire, earth, air, and water, and the barter was between the contents peculiar to each.

"Three fine salamanders," cries Fire, "who'll buy? who'll buy?"

"I will, with a couple of wild geese," answers Air.

"I will, with a diamond, a pearl, and a ruby," exclaims Earth.

But Earth is shouted down here by Water, who claims the pearl, and throws in the coral island, mamma had been reading about that morning to make necklaces of, and claims the Salamanders as a matter of course. Then follows a fight with Earth, who maintains that the coral island, when out of water, must be hers, because trees sometimes grew upon them; on which Water adds a tear or two to her kingdom, as she yields the point; and her bargain could not have been closed but that mamma assures them the pretty red coral which people make into beads does grow deep under the water, and is quite a different thing from the coral of the Coral Islands. Whereat Water claps her hands in delight, and the Salamanders are sent whizzing to her by Fire in exchange for the red coral that necklaces are made of. But of course

they can't live in their new element, and make such a spluttering and fizzing that poor Water is glad to return them to their natural home with one more turn of the table.

This is merely a specimen of the games the four drawers and the spinning table gave rise to. There were plenty more, remember. And they were all the children's own invention, that was the great delight. And this was the nice part of the old round table's peculiarities.

The nasty one was that by all this constant spinning the pivot on which the table turned had worked itself loose, and it had a sad habit of giving way with a disagreeable creaky crack wherever it was leant upon. So if a couple of children were drawing at it, and one happened to lift up her arm suddenly, down went the other side, and the pencil of the artist performed a wild uncontrollable vagary over the paper. Oh! the beautiful men and women, to say nothing of trees and houses, that were completely spoilt, because one of the party had what the children called, "let up the table!" Indeed, occasionally, after a burst of disturbance and distress (not to say quarrelling) in consequence, mamma might be heard observing to papa, "My dear, we must do something about the children's round table, it is really getting *too* bad." To which, however, he seldom answered any more than this: "Well, if you like, my dear; but it has its advantages."

And so it had, as I told you. But this you will have to take upon trust, for who ever sees a round table with drawers in it in these degenerate days?

And on the whole mamma was satisfied to let the advantages atone for defects, for she could only have steadied the poor old table by putting a stop to its rotatory motion; but the next time she heard a creaky crack, she would try to be beforehand with all grumbling by calling out: "Oh dear me! there goes poor Earth; I hope she's not hurt," on which the children would laugh at mamma's knowing the name so well, and forget to quarrel with the offending table or each other.

Then there was another advantage the table had. There were four drawers in it, and as it happened, at the time I am talking about there were also four children; so each child had a drawer to itself, in which it might put anything it liked. Practically, be it whispered, these drawers were turned into sad rubbish holes, but that was not their



fault. The drawers were comfortable, roomy drawers, and might have been, and could be made any day, perfect domestic "savings banks" of all the pretty things grown-up people give to children. But, at any rate, the having a right to them was a great point—so great, indeed, that after the arrival of the new baby, several very serious discussions took place among his brother and sisters as to what could possibly be done, when he was old enough to come down and have a drawer of his own, a general fear pervading all minds that if he had not one to himself he would vote himself a share in all, and act on the persuasion. There was not much to be alarmed about in reality. If he had voted himself a right in brother Harry's drawer, for instance, and plunged his little fat fist inside, there was nothing to come out but bits of scribbled paper, an old pocket-book or two, some firestones and knuckle-bones, a slate pencil, a knife with all the blades gone, a few nails, a left-hand glove, and two or three letters from uncles and aunts. The girls' drawers might have amused him more, for they were squeezed much tighter with scraps for patchwork and doll's clothes, and an occasional book; shell-pincushions, ivory needle-cases (however empty of needles) and so on.

But right is right, and everybody likes their own drawer whether they use it to any good purpose or not; so what was to be done when the new baby came down-stairs remained a great difficulty for some time. Indeed, I do not know when it would have been cleared up but that at last the eldest of the family, Harry, who owned one of the long drawers, declared himself willing to resign in his brother's favour.

"I shall abdicate;" said he, for he had been reading English history with his eldest sister, Barbara; "I shall abdicate, for I'm sure to be gone to school by that time; and besides, I don't care for the drawer a bit."

Saying which he pulled it completely out, and emptied its contents on the table; then restored it to its place, shutting it to with a bang, and declaring that now it was ready for baby as soon as baby was ready for it, and none of the girls' nonsense was ever to be put inside, under pains and penalties innumerable. At the moment the three other children were far too much amused by overhauling brother Harry's property to pay much attention to his words, but mamma had heard them, and settled in her own mind that Harry was a little out-

growing the round table amusements, in consequence of which she began to think what could be done for him, and took measures accordingly.

What those measures were, however, did not transpire for many evenings afterwards; but at last one night, as Harry was lounging over the table, watching the two little sisters nursing their dolls, and the elder one drawing, he, having nothing particular to do himself at the moment, said all at once, as if a brilliant idea had struck him: "Come, let's see what's in my empty drawer," a witticism which set his sisters laughing with one accord, and the joke was not diminished when Harry, having whirled the table round and pulled open his drawer, sat staring at the inside as if he had seen a ghost. Even Barbara was roused from her book to look up, but she still only thought it Harry's nonsense when he made his eyes into saucers by staring, and repeated in solemn whispers—

"Is this a dagger that I see before me?"

Lucy and Ada meanwhile began to feel quite creepy, and begged he "wouldn't," as they called it, for the dolls didn't like it, on which Harry clutched at something in the drawer, and, pulling it out, began to examine what looked like a roll of paper. The curiosity of all the girls was roused now, and there were shouts of "What is it, Harry?—let me see;" "Do let me see—is it a picture?" "Do show it!"

But Harry now felt himself complete master of his position, and springing on a chair, eluded them all by holding the manuscript high above his head, while he ordered his sisters to sit down or he should tell them nothing; whereat they grumbled but obeyed, on which brother Harry condescended to explain. The drawer was a magical drawer, that was clear, he said. It belonged to a fairy, no doubt, as everything else in the world did as far as he could make out, and the fairy was fond of travelling—as who wouldn't be if they had the chance?—and she had been lately in Europe—he had found that out from the papers. She used to be in Asia, as they all knew, when he dealt in elephants and parrots, but the world had gone round so fast lately that his drawer had turned into Europe and little Lucy's was Asia now, so she could have parrots and elephants all day long without bargaining for them. He supposed the fairy was filling his drawer for the baby upstairs against he came down, and as she had begun by a story from France (which it was)



she must have been there to fetch it—that was as plain as the candle on the table, or the curls on Barbara's head.

But the sisters could not attend to Harry's reasoning conclusions. They wished he wouldn't go on talking. Was it really a story? What was it about? They wished he wouldn't be tiresome; they wished he would sit down; they wished he would read the story, if it was one.

"Far the best plan," observed mamma, from the other table.

"Yes, mamma, I know," began Harry, getting down and turning round. "Only, you know, fair play's a jewel. And as the drawer was mine till I gave it to Baby, I think I ought to be Lord Protector for him till he's of age to come to his own, like the people in history. Of course, I'm at liberty to use his goods for the benefit of his country and subjects, so I'll read his story out loud, if everybody likes."

And so the matter was settled.

And Barbara leant back in her chair to listen, with her feet on a little stool; and Lucy and Ada nursed their dolls, turning their wax faces carefully opposite Harry, so that they might seem to be listening, too.

And thus they waited, till they were surprised at finding themselves waiting, for Harry remained silent, though the papers lay open before him.

"He *wont* read it," whimpered little Lucy, at last. "It's very ill—"

On which Harry burst out with "Justice—The first day," in a loud voice, then looked round to see the effect.

"That isn't the name of the story, Harry, is it?" asked Barbara.

"Explain!" cried mamma, from the table. "Think it over a moment, Harry, as if you were in the little ones' place, and explain."

"Well," said Harry, after a pause of consideration, "I'll tell you all about it. This isn't exactly a story, you see; but I didn't know what else to call it. There is a story in it, but you have to find the story part out by what the people say. It's a dialogue, that is, a sort of talk between a father and three sons, and it's called 'Justice.' I suppose, mamma (here he turned to his mother), because there's something about doing justice among them all in it. Then, you see," continued Harry, who began now to understand himself as he spoke, "as there is all they said about justice on three different days, so there's 'Justice—The first day;' 'Justice—The second day;' 'Justice—The



third day,' as the names of the three parts. The same people talk all through. I think it looks very nice," he observed, in conclusion.

"We shall understand it quite well, now," remarked Barbara; and Harry gave one glance at her face, took courage, and began:

JUSTICE.\*—THE FIRST DAY.

*Mr. Seymour; Charles, Augustus, and Edward, his children.*

MR. SEYMOUR.—Charles! Augustus! Edward! Come here, my dear children, come!

CHARLES (*running forward with the rest*).—What do you want with us, papa?

MR. SEYMOUR.—That is just what I am going to tell you. And it's what you will be delighted to hear. I have got a present for each of you. Look here, Charles, you are the eldest. Here is a horse. I give it you for your very own. Do you understand? That is to say, from this time it is yours to do what you please with.

CHARLES.—Oh, papa, thank you. How we shall race about together!

MR. SEYMOUR.—Augustus, here is a wheelbarrow for you. It is for no one but yourself, remember. You only have a right to use it.

AUGUSTUS.—Thank you, papa. It shall not remain in the coach-house long together. It shall carry about the visitors to my garden.

MR. SEYMOUR.—That is a good idea. Now, then, Edward, it is your turn. Here is a little coach. A fairy coach, I think, for of course you clumsy children can't get in. But you can draw it about over the gravel.

EDWARD.—Oh, papa, how pretty it is! I like it so much. Thank you, papa. I will run and try it at once.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Stay, stay, my dears; one minute more. I have still something to say to you, and that is a bit of good advice. If you wish to endear yourselves to each other, you must sometimes exchange your playthings. Good brothers ought always to be obliging, and in this way you will each vary your own amusements, and feel much happier at heart. Is not that true, Charles? I ask you particularly.

CHARLES.—I quite agree, papa.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Do you know why I asked you rather than the others?

\* Revised translation from "The Family Book; or, Children's Journal," of Mons. Berquin. 1798.

CHARLES.—Oh, I suspect, papa. I think I know.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Let me hear what you think. I want to see if you are right.

CHARLES.—You were in the garden yesterday, papa, when I was playing with Augustus. He begged me to lend him my whip. I was not willing to do it. He was angry because I would not, and so our game was spoilt.

MR. SEYMOUR.—I am very glad you remembered this. It is just an instance of what is sure to happen when children are not good-natured among themselves. You should always accustom yourselves to lend your toys one to the other. Only mind, you must never take them from one another without leave. You, Charles, have no right either to Augustus's wheelbarrow or Edward's coach. You ought never to touch them without first asking your brothers if they are willing to lend them. If they are, well and good. You may keep them till they want them again. But then you are bound to return them with a good grace, as they belong to them and not to you. Do you understand me, dear?

CHARLES.—Yes, papa.

MR. SEYMOUR.—And you, Augustus, must never take Edward's coach or Charles's horse, if they do not choose to lend them. Every one is master of his own, and we must all respect each other's rights, or society couldn't hold together.

AUGUSTUS.—Papa, I quite understand. It is quite fair, I know.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Lastly, you Edward, must not so much as touch your brother's playthings without permission, any more than they must meddle with yours. None of you have any right but to that which I have given him for his own. Well, that is all; and now that you seem quite to understand my instructions, go and enjoy yourselves under the trees, and remember to agree, like good boys.

(*All together.*)—Yes, yes, yes; papa.

#### THE SECOND DAY.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Well, my dears, you seemed to agree so well together yesterday. Why have you not done the same to-day?

CHARLES.—Papa, it was not my fault. Augustus took my horse, and would not give it to me again.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Had he asked you for it?

CHARLES.—No, papa.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Augustus, how is this? Why did you take your brother's horse? Did not I tell you yesterday you were never to take it without his leave?

AUGUSTUS.—Yes, papa, I know. But I had nothing to play with. Edward had laid hold of my wheelbarrow, and I found Charles's horse doing nothing, so I thought I might use it while he was running after the butterflies.

MR. SEYMOUR.—That has nothing to do with it. You had no right to the horse yourself, because its owner did not happen to be using it just then. And you, Edward, why did you take your brother's wheelbarrow without inquiring if he wished to lend it you?

EDWARD.—Papa, while I was gone indoors for a minute, Augustus had been drawing my carriage about without asking my leave. So I took my revenge by trundling his wheelbarrow.

MR. SEYMOUR.—It seems to me, Augustus, that you brought this on yourself; but you, Edward, must not take the law into your own hands in this way another time. Your brother's doing wrong, by taking your things does not justify you in doing wrong by taking theirs. Otherwise your quarrels will never end. The proper plan is to ask them to return what is yours, and if they refuse, tell them you will let me know. If they still refuse, there is nothing left for you but to come to me, and I will see you righted at once. Now, then, all of you give me your toys, and let me do justice among you.

CHARLES.—What is doing justice, papa?

MR. SEYMOUR.—Restoring things to their right owners, my dear, and punishing those who have offended against the laws. Here, Charles, is your horse. Augustus, take your wheelbarrow. Edward, there is your carriage. Now every one has his own again. But, as Augustus began these disputes by taking Edward's carriage while Edward was gone indoors, and also seized on Charles's horse without leave, while Charles was running after butterflies, my decision is, that he does not play with his wheelbarrow for the rest of the day, but that it shall remain in the corner.

AUGUSTUS.—But, papa—

MR. SEYMOUR.—My dear boy, the judge has pronounced the sentence,

and you must feel in your secret heart that it is a just one. And you know you must obey my orders without murmuring.

AUGUSTUS.—Yes, papa, I know, I submit.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Good; that is always your first duty. As for you, Edward, be sure you remember what I said to you about not taking the law in your own hands. You have no right to take anything from another under the pretext that he has taken something from you. You may call it doing justice to yourself, but it is certainly doing wrong to your neighbour. It is the parents' business to redress grievances—that is, do justice among their children; the children must not attempt it among themselves, or they would spend the whole day in taking and retaking their toys, till they quarrelled quite seriously, and perhaps fought at last, which would be dreadful among brothers, who ought always to love each other and be kind. No, remember henceforth that it is my particular duty to settle your disputes; only try, as far as you can, to agree among yourselves, so that you may not be constantly troubling the poor judge.

#### THE THIRD DAY.

MR. SEYMOUR.—How is this, boys? What makes you behave in this manner? What have you still to dispute about?

AUGUSTUS.—Papa, Charles has taken my ball, and pushed it into a hole.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Run off, Charles, at once. It is your business to fetch the ball out, as you put it in. You know it belongs to Augustus, and though he may have lent it you, you are bound to restore it.

CHARLES.—I would willingly, papa, but it is not my fault that the hole is so deep; it is impossible to touch the ball, even with the tongs.

MR. SEYMOUR.—That is nothing to Augustus. He must not be the sufferer because you have pushed his ball into a hole you cannot get it out of. It is you who have lost it, and ought to find it; and if that is not in your power, you must make the loss good to your brother by giving him another equally good. If he cannot have what belongs to him, you must give him something of equal value. That is only justice, I am sure, you must see. Have you a similar ball?

CHARLES.—Yes, papa; here it is.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Augustus, see if this ball is as good as your own.



AUGUSTUS.—Yes, papa; exactly.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Very good. It is now yours, to replace the one your brother has lost. Charles, you owe it him justly, as you have deprived him of his own. It is not fair that he should suffer for your accident with his goods. I am only sorry you did not make this amends of your own accord. If you had done so, I should have said you were a just child, ready to restore every one their rights without giving his father the trouble of making him do so. But, of course, when children will not be just to each other of themselves, their father must insist on doing justice for them; must he not?

CHARLES.—Yes, papa, I think that myself.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Why did you not make the reflection at first, then? But it is impossible you can have failed to do so. Come, own the truth honestly at once. Did you not feel a consciousness within yourself, whispering that it was your duty to give Augustus your ball, as you had lost his?

CHARLES.—It did come across me, papa, I own.

MR. SEYMOUR.—Then what a pity, my dear boy, not to yield to an honest conviction. You would have been far better pleased with yourself had you done so, than you are at this moment. But let this serve as a lesson for the future. Never stifle the first movement of your conscience when it tells you what is right to be done. It is by obeying these righteous impulses, at whatever cost to one's self, that we acquire the habit and love of justice, the most Christian and useful virtue among men.

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“It is a capital story, or whatever it ought to be called,” cried Harry, when he got to the end. “Look here, you girls, Lucy and Ada in particular, I know I take liberties with the least. I shall have a general clearing out of conscience and my drawers in consequence. It must be by daylight, though, that's the worst. Well, never mind, we shall soon be in bed and asleep, and there's not much difficulty in waiting *then*. So to-morrow, after lessons, I appoint you all to come to my room for JUSTICE, and I shall bare all my soul and cupboards before you; and if you find anything of mine—no, your own, I mean, among my things, you are welcome to it. Ada, what are you grinning about? That little old smelling bottle you had got tired of? Ah, monster, didn't I promise you the crockery dog's face that comes in half, for it?”

"Promise!" said little Ada, softly, but with a smile, for the little ones loved the stout boy who romped so pleasantly with them at times.

"Oh, promise," cried Harry; "well, to-morrow comes fulfilment, and if you want interest for your waiting, I shall find rubbish enough to pay it."

"It *will* be jolly," murmured Lucy to Ada; and Ada nodded her head in return, but without answering; for Harry had just then proposed a vote of thanks to the fairy of the drawer, and only wished she might live a thousand and one nights, and send every one something. "For no doubt she'd give us different sorts of things at different times, wouldn't she, mamma?" he concluded. An appeal which mamma answered, like the old woman of Prague in the "Book of Nonsense," by the oracular word "Perhaps."

## SHELTER.

<p>BY the wide lake's margin I          marked her lie—          The wide, weird lake where the          rushes sigh—          A fair young thing, with a shy, soft          eye;          And I deemed that her thoughts          had flown          To her home, and her brethren, and          sisters dear,          As she lay there watching the dark,          deep mere,          All motionless, all alone.</p> <p>Then I heard a noise, as of men and          boys,          And a boisterous troop drew nigh.          Whither now will retreat those fairy          feet?          Where hide till the storm pass by?</p>	<p>One glance—the wild glance of a          hunted thing—          She cast behind her; she gave one          spring;          And there followed a splash and a          broadening ring          On the lake where the rushes sigh.</p> <p>She had gone from the ken of          ungentle men!          Yet scarce did I mourn for that;          For I knew she was safe in her own          home then,          And, the danger past, would appear          again,          For she was a water-rat!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">C. S. C.</p>
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## A NORTH POLE STORY.

## A FACT.

UP where the world grows cold  
 Under the sharp North star,  
 The wrinkled ice is very old,  
 And the life of man is far;  
 None to see when the fog falls  
 white,  
 And none to shiver and hear  
 How wild the bears are in the night  
 Which lasts for half a year.

The wind may blow as it will,  
 But it cannot shake a tree,  
 Nor stir the waves which lie so  
 still—  
 It is the corpse of a sea!  
 The sun comes out over flowerless  
 strands  
 Where only ice-tears flow,  
 When the pale North weeps for sweet  
 woodlands  
 Which she must never know.

Earth speaks with awful lips—  
 "No place for man is here!  
 Between my bergs I'll crush your  
 ships  
 If you will come too near:  
 You shall be slain by bitter wind,  
 Or starved on barren shore,  
 My cruel snow shall strike you blind;  
 Go—trouble me no more!"

But British men are fain  
 To venture on and through,  
 And when you tell them to refrain,  
 They set themselves to do;  
 Into the secrets of the snow  
 With steps unshamed they press,  
 And answer Nature's coldest "No,"  
 With a great shout of "Yes."

It was a little band  
 Went on that dangerous track,  
 To do a message from our land  
 And to bring an answer back;  
 The frost had bound their good ship  
 tight,  
 And years were come and gone,  
 When a few brave hearts, as best  
 they might,  
 Went over the shores alone.

And as one strode so bold,  
 He saw a sight of fear—  
 Nine white wolves came over the  
 wold,  
 And they were watching a deer;  
 By three and by two and by one  
 A cunning half-moon they made,  
 They glanced at each other and did  
 not run,  
 But crept like creatures afraid.





They knew what they were about,  
 And the poor thing knew it too,  
 It turned its head like a child in  
 doubt,  
 And shrank, and backward drew;  
 But whether it looked to left or  
 right  
 It met a savage eye,  
 And the man stood still and saw the  
 sight,  
 And felt that it must die.

Backward, trembling and fast,  
 And onward, crafty and slow,  
 And over the cliff's sheer edge at  
 last,  
 And crash on the ice below;  
 But then with a whirl and a plunge  
 and a whoop,  
 The wolves are down the hill;  
 They break their ranks that wise  
 white troop,  
 When it is time to kill.

And days and nights went past,  
 And the men grew weary and pale,  
 Scanty food and freezing blast,  
 And hearts beginning to fail!  
 The wanderer knew his steps were  
 slow,  
 And his eyes were languid and  
 dim,  
 When nine white wolves came over  
 the snow,  
 And they were watching—him.

He saw them gather and glance,  
 And he remembered the deer!  
 He saw them frame their cunning  
 advance,  
 And he felt a little fear!  
 But never a hair's breadth did he  
 swerve,  
 Nor lower his looks a whit,  
 But he faced the cruel scimitar-  
 curve,  
 And then—walked up to it!

There is never a beast so strong  
 As to bear a brave man's eye!  
 They crouched; they looked as if  
 nothing was wrong,  
 And then they turned to fly.  
 The man stood still and drew his  
 breath,  
 When he saw the scattering ranks;  
 He had been face to face with death:  
 I hope he uttered thanks.

There's a fireside far away,  
 A little anxious now,  
 Where a man shall sit one joyful  
 day,  
 And tell of the world of snow;  
 And tell of the wolves who sup so  
 grim,  
 And leave no bone behind;  
 And how they meant to sup on him,  
 But looked, and changed their  
 mind!

M. B. S.

# Welcome Spring.

FOR TWO VOICES.

Words and Music by H. T.

*Allegro Moderato.*

Sweet Spring is com-ing; Yes, beau-ti-ful Spring,

Com-ing, com-ing, com-ing is Spring. Bees rich-ly la-den their

ho-ney-bags bring, . . Humming, humming bees ho-ney bring.

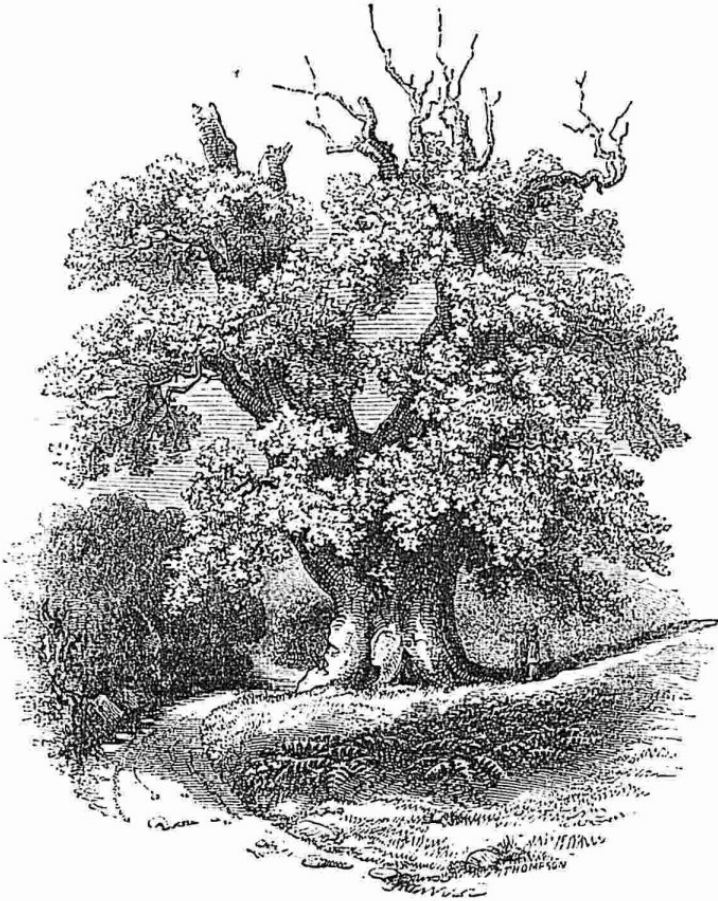
Bluebells and daisies, with primroses sweet,  
Blowing, blowing on the bank sweet;  
All the wild flowers on hill and dale meet,  
Glowing, glowing sweet wild flow'rs meet.

Clouds in the sunshine sail o'er the blue sky,  
Lightly, lightly sail o'er the sky;  
Sunbeams reflected are dancing on high,  
Brightly, brightly dancing on high.

Swallows are skimming on outstretched wing,  
Fleetly, fleetly darting on wing;  
All the sweet songsters with melody sing,  
Sweetly, sweetly } sweet song-birds sing.  
Cuckoo, Cuckoo, }

Birds, bees, and flowers their offerings bring,  
Bringing, bringing offerings to Spring;  
So let us gaily and merrily sing,  
Singing, singing welcome to Spring.

## MAY MEMORANDA.



**M**AY, the fifth month of our year, was the third in the calendar of Romulus, he having begun the year in March.

The origin of its name must remain doubtful, for even Ovid, the Roman poet, does not pretend to decide between the three suggestions he gives.

In his Calendar of Festivals, he imagines the Muses sitting together and discussing the subject, and records the supposed opinions of "Polyhymnia," "Urania," and "Calliope."

Polyhymnia derives the word from Majesty (Maestas), an attribute which, like many other attributes, the Greek personified into a goddess; and she, after sitting by Jove above, came down to earth to sit by Romulus.

Urania, with more show of reason, argued that 'formerly great reverence was paid to white hairs, and the wrinkles of age were honoured. The duties of youth were to carry on war and offer defence; whilst age had less bodily strength, and could not use arms, yet often helped the country by its counsels; that formerly the Parliament was not open except to the old, whence it received the name of 'Senate.' The Senior gave laws to the people, and the age at which this distinction was granted was defined by law. The Senior walked surrounded by the youths; and, if he had only one companion, he took the inner side. No one without shame could speak in the presence of the old; who also

administered reproof. Romulus perceived all this, and called these aged ones 'fathers;' and to them he committed the administration of his new city. Hence," continues Urania, "I am persuaded that these *majores*—these elders—gave the name to May, in compliment to their own age; and Numitor may have said to his grandson, Romulus, 'Give this month to the old men,' to which he consented, whilst June was assigned to the Juniors."

Calliope gave a different account still, and said it was Mercury who gave the name to the month, in honour of Maia, his beautiful mother. She was one of the seven daughters of Atlas and the sea-nymph Pleione, and, with her other sisters, was placed in the heavens after her death: and there she shines now, as the brightest and most beautiful of the Pleiades.

It was all very well for Calliope to give the credit to Mercury, but as festivals in honour of that god were celebrated at this season, it is possible that Romulus may have been the person who paid Maia the compliment. On the whole, however, Urania's version is the one we prefer; but when the Muses could not agree, nor Ovid decide among them, it behoves us to leave everybody else to their own opinions.

Our Saxon ancestors were much more pastoral and simple: they called this time of the year "Trimilki," because now they began to milk their kine three times a day. So says one Richard Verstegan, who wrote a very curious book about Saxon customs and manners, A.D. 1605.

A great many great historical events have happened in May. Among others, it is the month in which our good Queen was born; and this being so, we hope her young subjects will be interested and amused to trace her lineage in a new way—viz., backwards—all the way to William the Conqueror.

By this means we get at the curious fact that, in spite of revolutions and cutting off of kings' heads and abdications, the royal succession has been kept up through blood relationship from 1066 down to the present year of grace, 1866—*i.e.*, for 800 years.

Her Majesty Queen VICTORIA born 24th May, 1819.

Niece of	William IV
Brother of	George IV.,
Son of	George III.,
Grandson of	George II.,
Son of	George I.,
Cousin of	Queen Anne,
Cousin of	William III.,
Nephew of	James II.,
Brother of	Charles II.,
Son of	Charles I.,
Son of	James I.,
Cousin of	Queen Elizabeth,
Sister of	Queen Mary,
Sister of	Edward VI.,
Son of	Henry VIII.,
Son of	Henry VII.,
Cousin of	Richard III.,
Uncle of	Edward V.,
Son of	Edward IV.,
Cousin of	Henry VI.,
Son of	Henry V.,
Son of	Henry IV.,
Cousin of	Richard II.,
Grandson of	Edward III.,
Son of	Edward II.,
Son of	Edward I.,
Son of	Henry III.,
Son of	John,
Brother of	Richard I.,
Son of	Henry II.,
Cousin of	Stephen,
Nephew of	Henry I.,
Brother of	William Rufus,
Son of	William the Conqueror.

And now, having begun with royalty, we will mention a few of the great historical events of May, in which the fate of kings was involved.

On May 4, 1471, was fought the battle of Tewkesbury, which brought to an end for many years the great struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster, commonly (but strangely enough) called "the Wars of the Roses," because of the flowers they bore as distinguishing devices. On this day Edward, Duke of York (descended from the third son of Edward III.), defeated for the last time the arms of Henry VI. (descended from the fourth



son of Edward III.) Henry VI. was already Edward's prisoner; but at Tewkesbury his wife, Margaret of Anjou, and his son, a boy of eighteen, were with the army, and the latter was taken prisoner in the field. To Edward's everlasting dishonour, he took this poor boy's life; and his father being found dead in the Tower, where he lay a prisoner, within a fortnight after the battle, it is supposed that he, equally with his son, fell a victim to Edward's determination to establish his own White Rose upon the throne. Queen Margaret was also made prisoner, and confined in the Tower, but was afterwards ransomed, and died in Anjou in 1482.

Shakespeare has worked out the character of Margaret from first to last, and the picture is probably as true as it is terrible on the whole. In the second part of *Henry VI.* the play opens with her arrival in England as bride—

"The fairest Queen that ever King received."

At the end of Part III. King Edward agrees to her ransom—

"Away with her, and waft her hence to France."

In the course of this play we find the Yorkist and Lancastrian party wearing their badges—the white and red roses—in their hats and caps, whether on the field of battle or in the council-chamber:

"Father of Warwick, know you what this means?"

[*Taking the red rose out of his cap.*]

"Look here, I throw my infamy at thee,"

says Clarence, when, in the field before Coventry, he forsakes the Lancastrians, and goes over to the "White Rose" party.

Thirty years ago there was a memorial of these old feuds, or rather of their termination by intermarriage (Henry VII. with Princess Elizabeth), in most gardens. We mean the "York and Lancaster rose," on which the red and white colours were beautifully streaked. And even yet the species is to be met with in old-fashioned spots, where very energetic gardeners have not cleared out old treasures in favour of new ones.

May 19, 1536. This day is marked in our history as that on which Queen Anne Boleyn,

the second wife of Henry VIII., was beheaded at the age of 29 years.

The father of this lady, so celebrated for her beauty and sad fate, was Sir Thomas Boleyn, and her mother a daughter of the Duke of Norfolk. She had been brought up from an early age in the French Court, from which she came to be maid of honour to Katherine of Aragon, King Henry's first wife.

Whilst in this position Henry saw and admired her; and it became Anne Boleyn's fate to be borne on to a fatal height of prosperity by a tide which owed its movement to far different and deeper causes.

On the 31st May, 1533, the new Queen, who had been privately married in January, entered London in procession, and the following day was crowned in Westminster with circumstances of the utmost splendour. In the autumn of the year Queen Anne's happiness was completed by the birth of a daughter, afterwards the great Queen Elizabeth.

For two years and a half Queen Anne continued in the enjoyment of the utmost prosperity, courted and smiled upon by all. Then the change came: Henry, disappointed in his hopes of a son, and influenced by other causes, lost his affection for her, and listened to accusations against her; and finally, on May 19, 1536, Anne Boleyn laid her slender neck upon the block erected within the Tower, where also she was buried. Alas, for the favour of princes!

Coming down still further—namely, to A.D. 1610—we find the 14th of May made painfully memorable in France by the assassination of Henry IV. A French journalist tells us that, during the morning of the 14th, the King being at play with the little Duke de Vendôme, the child mentioned that "La Brosse" (a celebrated astrologer of the period) had foretold that "His Majesty was threatened with a great danger on that day:" to which the King replied, laughing: "La Brosse is an old rascal who wants your money, and you are a young simpleton for believing him: our days are numbered." The Duke de Vendôme repeated the same story to the Queen, who entreated His Majesty not to quit the Louvre that day on which he made the same answer as before.

After dinner he lay down on his bed to sleep, but got up again, feeling melancholy, uneasy, and disturbed; and for some time walked up and down his room, then threw himself again on the bed: but being still unable to sleep, once more arose and inquired what o'clock it was? The "exempt" of the Guards replied that it was four, and added: "Sire, your Majesty appears sad and full of thought. Were you to take an airing, it might divert you."

"You say well," answered the King; "let my coach be got ready, I will visit the Duke of Sully at the Arsenal."

Now the Duke of Sully was indisposed, and according to the Bishop of Rodez (an English translation of whose life of Henry IV. appeared in 1663) the King wanted also to see the preparations that were being made for the coronation of the Queen next day.

Accordingly he set out—himself and the Duke d'Epemon being alone in the coach—but he had no less than six other gentlemen of distinction with him. The translation of Bishop Rodez says they were "before and in the boots;" but the French journalist describes Marshals de Lavardin and de Roquelaure as being "by the coach door on the Duke d'Epemon's side," while "on the King's side were the Duke de Montbason and the Marquis de la Force," and in the front the Marquises de Mirabeau and Duplessis Liancourt. It was an extraordinary thing that so surrounded it should have been possible for harm to come to any one within the carriage, but it happened thus (we quote in a great measure from Bishop Rodez):—"His coach entering out of the street of St. Honoré into that of the Ferronnerie, or ironmongers, found on the right hand a cart laden with wine, and on the left, another laden with hay; which causing some trouble, he was constrained to stop; for the street is very narrow by reason of the shops builded against the wall of the churchyard of St. Innocent's.....The footmen being passed through the churchyard of Innocent's to avoid trouble, and no person being near the coach, a man named Francis Ravailac, who had followed the King from the Louvre, observing the side on which he sat, thrust himself between the shops and the coach; and setting

one foot on one of the spokes of the hind wheel struck once, twice, thrice, at the King. At the first blow he exclaimed: 'I am wounded,' but the second struck his heart, and he died at once; the third hit only (Bishop Rodez says) on the sleeve of the Duke de Montbason." Of the murderer, Francis Ravailac, and his motives, but little is known with certainty. He had been a monk, but had quitted "the frock" and was turned "sollicitor of businesses" in Paris, where he had been for about two years before he accomplished this dreadful deed. "If it be demanded," says Bishop Rodez, "who inspired him with so fiendish a thought, History answers that she knows nothing; and that in a thing so important, we are not allowed to set up suspicions and conjectures for assured truths."

Here, then, we leave it, as the good Bishop has done, who must be supposed to have known much more of the matter than we can find out now. Ravailac was an enthusiast, and gloried in his crime, made no effort at escape, and, being taken and condemned, suffered a terrible death with the utmost composure.

Henry IV. was called "The Great," and justly so, for, in spite of many serious faults, he governed wisely and well, and made himself beloved as the father and friend of his people. He left lasting benefits behind him, having given a fresh impetus to trade, reformed the law of the land, encouraged the arts, protected science, agriculture, and every sort of useful labour and work. He is celebrated for introducing silk worms and mulberry plantations into France, and it is said that in his day hair-powder was first worn.

"Here follow some curious investigations," says a French writer, "which were made upon the connection of the number 14 with Henry IV. He was born 14 centuries, 14 decades, and 14 years after the birth of Christ (1554); he came into the world on the 14th of December; gained his most important victory (that of Ivry) on the 14th of March; and died on the 14th of May; having lived 4 times 14 years and 14 weeks; and there were 14 letters in his name, *Henri de Bourbon*."

Our young readers may amuse themselves by verifying these details.

Later still, viz., in 1660, on May 8th, Charles II. of England was publicly proclaimed king, and he entered London in state, and took possession of the throne on his birthday, May 29. The old habit of celebrating the 29th of May by wearing oak-leaves and oak-apples in caps, hats, button-holes, horses' heads, &c., still exists in every part of England, unromantic as it is supposed to have become. Even a railway-train steaming into a smoky station in the manufacturing districts of this country will be seen with great oak-boughs in front of the engine; and in some villages a hue-and-cry is raised by the children after any one who is destitute of the adornment of the day. Now, it is very natural that even educated children may get into a mistake in consequence of this, fancying that perhaps King Charles entered London with a wreath of oak-leaves on his head, or something fantastic of that sort; but no such thing. The only connection between the day and the oak-leaves is, that about nine years before, Charles's life had been saved by his climbing up into an oak-tree and hiding among the branches, so eluding the pursuit of his enemies. This was after the battle of Worcester, in which he was defeated, and after which he had to leave England for many years. But the battle and the hiding in the oak took place in the month of September, 1651, very nearly nine years before his restoration to the throne of his father, after the death of Oliver Cromwell.

Still, as an oak-tree had saved the young king's life in the day of adversity, it was honoured afterwards by being made the badge of rejoicing for his prosperity, and the 29th of May has been called royal oak day, and has been kept as a festival of oak-leaves ever since, except in very backward seasons, when the cold north-east winds will not let the buds open and expand. These stories of wars sound as though they must have happened an incredibly long time ago. We can hardly think of the possibility of armies going about the country and turning the quiet fields into battle ground. Yet we touch the reality of such a state of things very closely when we are reminded by a newspaper announcement that a certain Miss Penderel—now living—the descendant of a farmer of that name who in 1651 inhabited

Boscobel, a "lone house on the borders of Staffordshire," is still receiving the family pension bestowed by government on her ancestors for the faithful assistance rendered by them to King Charles when he was in peril of his life, after the fight at Worcester. This was as follows, according to historians:—Although "death was denounced" against all who should conceal him, "a great reward promised to any one who should betray him," Mr. Penderel, of Boscobel, assisted by four brothers as staunch-hearted as himself, determined to help the king through his difficulties. Dressing him as a labourer, therefore, they took him with them to chop sticks in a wood, and once, "for better concealment he mounted an oak, where he sheltered himself among the leaves and branches for twenty-four hours." This was the "*Royal Oak*," which "for many years was regarded by the neighbourhood with great veneration," says Hume.

1717, May 7th. The Czar Peter the Great visits Paris. This seems a curious event to record, but Peter the Great of Russia was a very curious man. He had travelled *incognito* to various parts of Europe, England included, several years before, viz., 1691, but did not honour France on that occasion, owing to some misunderstanding between himself and Louis XIV. Now, however, he came to see everything that was to be seen, and pick up hints for the good of his own country, if possible, for such was always his way. He might have belonged to these days even, when everybody wants to know and to do a little of everything, and "progress" is the order of the day. Progress was the order of the Czar Peter's mind, if not of his day, but having battles to fight and enemies on more than one side to struggle with, he had only occasional opportunities of following his natural bent, which was for the cultivation of the arts and sciences, trade, literature, and everything calculated to raise the civilization of a country to its highest pitch.

But the story of Peter the Great is too long to be merely touched upon. It must be read at length. It is a wonderful instance of what a man can contrive to do when he has a will, however adverse the circumstances



of his life may be. Peter was kept back by his mother from the befitting education of his rank and position, and had often in his youth to suffer shame on that account in the society of his inferiors in condition. But he fought his way upwards at last, and a French account of his visit to Paris asserts that, although the Academy of Sciences exhibited their choicest and rarest productions to him, they showed him nothing as wonderful as himself. He corrected with his own hand some faults in the maps of his country, and became a member of the Academy at their urgent request.

Being taken to see the tomb of Cardinal Richelieu, it is said he paid no attention to the fine sculpture, remarkable though it was, but embraced the statue and exclaimed: "Great man, I would have given you half my kingdom to learn from you how to govern the other half!" This compliment must have been intended solely for the Cardinal's political skill. Peter's reforms in his own church—as, for instance, not allowing any one to adopt the monastic life under 50 years of age, and moderating the number of fast days—would scarcely have been suffered by Richelieu, had he been Peter's right-hand man. He altered the Russian Calendar, too, in conformity with ours. The Russians began their year previously in September, but he established our January as their first month, to the surprise and horror of the lower orders, who viewed the change as an attempt on his part to "alter the course of the sun." Indeed, some people, under the curious persuasion that the world had been created in their first month, September, persisted in using the old style, but by degrees every one came round. He effected this reform at the beginning of the century 1700, and celebrated the event by a solemn festival.

If these are but a few of the great historical events of May connected with kingdoms and kings, our readers must try to hunt up others for themselves. They will find that another King called "Great," Frederick of Prussia, died on the 31st of May, 1740, and there is much to be said about him. But we will close our Memoranda this time with an event of later

interest. In Mde. Tussaud's Exhibition of Waxwork Figures in London, is one of a dead Emperor. The figure is lying in a small tent bed, the very one, we are assured, in which the original of that figure really died. Such a fine outline of face is rarely seen. Imperial in feature as in the cast of expression, one would take such a man for a descendant of a long line of Kings. But no—it is the image of one who, though nobly, was obscurely, born in the small island of Corsica (August 15, 1760), and who, being pressed once on the subject of his ancestry, declared he dated his patent of nobility from his first victory.

In naming May 5 as the day of his death, our grown-up readers will know at once that we are speaking of the great Napoleon.

May 5, 1821; at that date, and in an island, but not Corsica—not in the country where his family had for so many years enjoyed the privileges of gentle blood, but on a strongly fortified rock almost in the South Atlantic—did the spirit of Napoleon the Great return to Him Who gave it, and Whom he had acknowledged shortly before his end in very remarkable words. They were addressed to his Italian doctor, whom he suspected of infidelity.

"Can you not," said he, "believe in a GOD Whose existence everything proclaims, and in Whom the greatest minds have believed?"

He took the Eagle grasping a Thunderbolt for his war device, and when you see an eagle chained or imprisoned in a cage, think of this great fallen man—Consul, General, Emperor, Ruler of Europe almost, once, and then a prisoner, exiled to the lonely rock-bound island of St. Helena, for ever in this world! It was a terrible fate, and one must suffer with the unfortunate, let the cause of misfortune be what it may. But the tender-hearted may console themselves by remembering that nothing short of imprisonment and exile could have checked this Eagle in his magnificent but unscrupulous flight. With this brief notice of the man who for many years was the terror of Europe, from crowned heads down to children, whom the nurses were wont to threaten with "Bonaparte's coming for you," to keep them in order, we complete our "Notabilia" for May.

ED.